

## Calcium Intake and Osteoporosis

### What is Osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis is a condition that causes your bones to become weak. As we age, we start to lose some of our bone. In osteoporosis, this natural process happens much faster than normal, which causes our bones to become very weak. This increases the risk of fractures, especially in the hips, spine, and wrist.

### How much Calcium Do You Need?

Calcium is needed to build healthy bones and teeth. The recommendations from the Osteoporosis Society of Canada for daily calcium intake are:

Age	Daily Calcium Requirement
4 to 8	800mg
9 to 18	1300mg
19 to 50	1000mg
50+	1200mg
Pregnant or lactating women 18+	1000mg

Source: Osteoporosis Society of Canada [www.osteoporosis.ca](http://www.osteoporosis.ca)

People should try to get most of their calcium from food. The rest should come from a supplement. If you drink more than 4 cups of coffee per day, you may need to increase your calcium intake, as caffeine causes less calcium to be absorbed in your body.

### High Calcium Foods to Include in Your Diet

Milk and milk alternatives such as cheese or yogurt are great sources of calcium. However, if you do not include milk and milk alternatives in your diet, there are other foods which also contain calcium. A good source of calcium has at least **250mg in one serving**.

Food	Serving Size	Calcium Content (mg)
Milk (Whole, 1%, 2%, Chocolate)	1 Cup (250ml)	296-322 mg
Fortified Soy, Rice, or Almond Beverage	1 Cup (250ml)	312-319 mg
Ricotta Cheese made with Partly Skimmed Milk	1/2 Cup (125ml)	335 mg
Whole Roasted Sesame Seeds	1/4 Cup (60ml)	376 mg
Fortified Orange Juice	1 Cup (250ml)	310 mg
Chia Seeds	1/4 Cup (60ml)	276 mg
Tofu (prepared with calcium sulfate and magnesium chloride)	150g	302 mg
Frozen or Cooked Collard Greens	1/2 Cup (125ml)	189 mg
Raw Kale	1/2 Cup (125ml)	145 mg

Source: Canadian Nutrient File: <https://food-nutrition.canada.ca/cnf-fce/nutrientSearch-rechercheAliment.do>

## Label Reading for Calcium

To help figure out how much calcium is in a packaged food always check the Nutrition Facts label.

### Look at the Serving Size

Be sure to compare the serving size in the Nutrition Facts table to the amount you are really eating. This is located at the very top of the table below the **Nutrition Facts** title. To find out the amount of nutrients you are eating, you may have to multiply or divide the amounts in the table.

### How Much Calcium is in My Food?

The amount of calcium is given as a percent daily value. This value tells you the percentage of a nutrient that is in the product based on a 2,000-calorie diet and 1000mg of calcium per day. Therefore, if a food has 30% calcium on the label, it contains 300 mg of calcium. Look for foods with at least 25% daily value in the serving size that you are going to eat.

## Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 cup (249g)

Servings Per Container 8

Amount Per Serving

**Calories** 210      **Calories from Fat** 80

% Daily Value\*

**Total Fat** 8g      **13%**

Saturated Fat 5g      **26%**

Trans Fat 0g

**Cholesterol** 30mg      **10%**

**Sodium** 200mg      **9%**

**Total Carbohydrate** 27g      **9%**

Dietary Fiber 1g      **5%**

Sugars 25g

**Protein** 9g

Vitamin A 6%      • Vitamin C 0%

Calcium 30%      • Iron 6%

Vitamin D 30%

## Calcium Supplements

- Calcium supplements are most commonly available as calcium carbonate and calcium citrate and may be in pill, chewable, or liquid forms.
- Calcium carbonate is best absorbed when taken with food, but calcium citrate can be taken at any time.
- Calcium carbonate needs to have acidic foods eaten at the same time (e.g., fresh fruit or fruit juice, white bread) to be absorbed.
- If you take medications for acid reflux, it is best to take calcium citrate.
- Most importantly, use the label to look at the amount of calcium in each tablet, and take the one that works best for you.