



## Accurate Clinic

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[www.AccurateClinic.com](http://www.AccurateClinic.com)

### Calcium

Calcium is a mineral needed to maintain strong bones and for muscles to move and for nerves to carry messages. Almost all calcium is stored in bones and teeth, where it supports their structure and hardness.

#### People at risk of not getting enough calcium:

Postmenopausal women: because they experience greater bone loss and do not absorb calcium as well.  
People with lactose intolerance and vegans: because they avoid the dairy products, the major source of calcium

#### Kidney stones

Most kidney stones are rich in calcium oxalate. Calcium from dietary supplements have a greater risk of kidney stones, especially among older adults. But calcium from foods does not appear to cause kidney stones. For most people, other factors (such as not drinking enough fluids) probably have a larger effect on the risk of kidney stones than calcium intake.

#### Recommended Daily Amount:

Adults: 1,000 mg  
Women >51y/o: 1200mg

#### Foods that provide calcium:

Dairy products: milk, yogurt, and cheese are the main food sources of calcium for most people

Kale, broccoli, collard greens and Chinese cabbage

Fish with soft bones that you eat, such as canned sardines and salmon.

Calcium is added to some breakfast cereals, fruit juices, soy and rice beverages, and tofu - *read food labels*

Most grains (such as breads, pastas, and unfortified cereals), while not rich in calcium, add significant amounts of calcium to the diet because people eat them often or in large amounts.

#### Calcium Supplements:

The two main forms of calcium dietary supplements are carbonate and citrate.

■ **Calcium carbonate** is inexpensive and is absorbed best when taken with food. Some over-the-counter antacid products, such as Tums® and Rolaids®, contain calcium carbonate. Each pill or chew provides 200–400 mg of calcium.

■ **Calcium citrate**, a more expensive form of the supplement, is absorbed well on an empty or a full stomach. In addition, people with low levels of stomach acid (those who take Prilosec, Nexium, Zantac etc) absorb calcium citrate more easily than calcium carbonate.

Calcium absorption is best when a person consumes no more than 500 mg at one time. So a person who takes 1,000 mg/day of calcium from supplements should split the dose rather than take it all at once. Calcium supplements may cause gas, bloating, and constipation. If any of these symptoms occur, try spreading out the calcium dose throughout the day, taking the supplement with meals, or changing the supplement brand or calcium form you take.



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### **Medication interactions with calcium supplements:**

Calcium supplements can reduce the absorption of these drugs when taken together:

- Antacids containing aluminum or magnesium increase calcium loss in the urine.
- Bisphosphonates (to treat osteoporosis)
- Antibiotics of the fluoroquinolone (Cipro) and tetracycline families
- Levothyroxine (meds for low thyroid like Synthroid))
- Phenytoin (Dilantin)
- Diuretics differ in their effects:
  - Thiazide-type diuretics (such as HCTZ) can raise blood calcium levels too high.
  - Loop diuretics (such as Lasix and Bumex) can drop blood calcium levels too low.
- Mineral oil and stimulant laxatives reduce calcium absorption.
- Steroids (cortisone and prednisone) can drop calcium levels and eventually cause osteoporosis if used for a long time.

### **Tips for Getting More Calcium:**

- Eat cereal with fat-free milk. Try adding fresh fruit.
- Drink an extra glass of milk every day; try calcium-fortified milk.
- Drink calcium-fortified orange juice.
- Choose frozen yogurt for dessert instead of cake or cookies.
- Add a slice of low-fat or fat-free cheese to sandwiches.