



Calcium, Vitamin D, & Osteoporosis

Calcium is essential for maintaining healthy bones. 99% of the calcium in your body is stored in the bones and teeth where it supports structure and function. Not getting enough calcium can contribute to the development of osteoporosis. Osteoporosis is a disease in which the bones become fragile and can break or fracture easily. Good sources of calcium include low-fat dairy products, soy products, and green leafy vegetables.

Vitamin D plays an important role in protecting your bones by helping absorb calcium into the bones. Vitamin D comes from sun exposure, supplements, and some foods such as fish, milk, and mushrooms.

Daily Recommendation Intakes

Group	Calcium (mg)	Vitamin D (IU)
<i>Non-pregnant or non-lactating adults</i>		
Age 19-50 years (men and women)	1000	600
Men age 51-70 years	1000	600
Women age 51-70 years	1200	600
Age 71 years or older (men and women)	1200	800
<i>Pregnant or lactating women</i>		
Age 14-18 years	1300	600
Age 19-50 years	1000	600

Exercise is also a key component in preventing osteoporosis. Exercise is not only good for muscle strength and endurance, but it also helps build and maintain muscle and bone density. Weight-bearing exercise, endurance training, and stretching are all beneficial for your bones. To ensure safety, discuss any new activity with your doctor. Try low impact weight-bearing exercises like walking, dancing, or low impact aerobics.

Daily recommended intakes of calcium and vitamin D vary by age and gender, as seen in the table to the left. If most of your calcium comes from dairy sources, you should meet both the minimum calcium and vitamin D requirements. If you are unable to tolerate dairy products, see your doctor about supplement recommendations.

Common Food Sources of Calcium (mg)

Food Source	Measurement	Calcium (mg)
Milk (skim)	1 cup	302
Yogurt (low fat, flavored)	8 oz.	300
Tofu (raw, firm)	1/2 cup	258
Calcium-fortified cereals	3/4 cup	250
Cheese	1 oz.	150-200
Broccoli	1 cup	100-150
Greens (mustard, collards, kale)	1/2 cup	150-200
Canned salmon (with bones)	3 1/2 oz.	200
Beans (white, black, pinto, kidney, lima, chickpeas)	1/2 cup	100-150
Canned sardines (with bones)	2 sardines	92