

Calcium and Vitamin D in Your Diet

Why are Calcium and Vitamin D needed?

- Calcium helps build and maintain strong bones and teeth.
- Vitamin D helps the body absorb calcium. Sunlight helps the body make vitamin D. During the winter, it can be hard to get enough daily sunlight.
- Some medicines such as oral steroids increase the risk for bone loss. To protect the bones, a calcium-rich diet is needed.

What are the best ways to get Calcium and Vitamin D?

- Choose 3 to 4 servings from the milk and dairy group every day.
- Add extra milk or cheese to pizza, soups, macaroni and cheese and baked goods.
- Avoid carbonated or caffeinated drinks such as coffee, tea and soda. They make it hard for the body to use the calcium.
- Weight bearing workouts at least three to four times a week will also help your bones stay strong. Walking, jogging, dancing, jumping rope, aerobics and skating are all good weight bearing exercises.
- Avoid smoking and alcohol. They prevent calcium from being absorbed into the bones.

How much Calcium or Vitamin D is needed?

Daily calcium needs by age

Age	Calcium needed per day*	Vitamin D needed per day*
0 – 6 months	200 mg	400 IU
6 months – 1 year	260 mg	400 IU
1 – 3 years	700 mg	600 IU
4 – 8 years	1,000 mg	600 IU
9 – 18 years	1,300 mg	600 IU
19 - 30 years	1,000 mg	600 IU

*Based on the 2010 Review of DRI's (Dietary Reference Intakes)

How much calcium and vitamin D is in foods?

Use the chart on the following page to know the amounts of calcium and vitamin D in various foods. Take note of portion sizes. In general, dairy foods have the most natural calcium and are usually fortified with vitamin D.

Calcium Food Sources

Product	Amount	Calcium (mg)
Dairy:		
Milk	8 ounces (1 cup)	300 mg
Cheese*	1 ounce	215 mg
Fortified soy milk, plain and flavored	8 ounces (1 cup)	300 mg
Yogurt*	5.3 ounces (1 container)	180 mg
Frozen Yogurt	½ cup	100 mg
Cottage Cheese	½ cup	95 mg
Ice Cream	½ cup	90 mg
Pudding, ready to eat	1 container	50 mg
Fruits and vegetables		
Rhubarb, cooked	½ cup	175 mg
Greens, cooked (collard greens, turnip greens, spinach)	½ cup	120 mg
Canned beans (pinto, black, red, kidney), cooked	½ cup	80 mg
Orange, medium	1	60 mg
Peas, cooked	½ cup	45 mg
Protein		
Almonds	¼ cup	100 mg
Calcium-fortified foods		
Calcium fortified juice*	8 ounces (1 cup)	300 mg
Calcium fortified cereal *	1 cup	110-1000 mg
Calcium-fortified cereal bars *	1 bar	300 mg
Other foods		
Cheese Pizza	1 slice	215 mg
Macaroni and Cheese	½ cup	180 mg
Molasses, blackstrap	1 tbsp	170 mg
Corn tortillas (6 inch)	1 tortilla	45 mg

Vitamin D Food Sources

Product	Amount	Vitamin D (IU)
Cod Liver Oil	1 tbsp	1360 IU
Salmon	3 oz	425 IU
Tuna (canned in water)	3 oz	155 IU
Calcium and Vitamin D-fortified juice*	8 ounces (1 cup)	140 IU
Pudding	1 cup	100 IU
Fortified soy milk, plain and flavored	8 ounces (1 cup)	100 IU
Milk	8 ounces (1 cup)	100 IU
Yogurt*	5.3 ounces (1 container)	55 IU
Eggs (yolk)	1 egg	40 IU
Calcium and Vitamin D-fortified cereal *	1 cup	40 IU

**Not all brands are fortified with vitamin D and/or calcium. Be sure to read food labels to select brands with vitamin D added.*

Using food labels to determine how much calcium and vitamin D is in a serving of a food

Both calcium and vitamin D are listed on the bottom of the nutrition facts label as a percent daily value. Use the rules below to figure out the amount of calcium or vitamin D in your food.

Rule of thumb for percent daily value:

5% or less means the food is poor source of calcium or vitamin D

20% or more means the food is a good source of calcium or vitamin D

Nutrition Facts		
Serving Size 1 cup (236ml)		
Servings Per Container 1		
Amount Per Serving		
Calories 80	Calories from Fat 0	
	% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g		0%
Saturated Fat 0g		0%
Trans Fat 0g		
Cholesterol Less than 5mg		0%
Sodium 120mg		5%
Total Carbohydrate 11g		4%
Dietary Fiber 0g		0%
Sugars 11g		
Protein 9g		17%
Vitamin A 10%	•	Vitamin C 4%
Calcium 30%	•	Iron 0% • Vitamin D 25%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.		

Calcium

- Add a zero to the percent daily value to know the amount of calcium per serving of the food.
- In the label to the left, 30% means there is 300 mg calcium in this food

Note: This rule does not apply to all nutrients on a food label.

Vitamin D

- Multiply the percent daily value by 4 to know the amount of vitamin D per serving of the food.
- In the label to the left, 25% x 4 = 100 IU vitamin D in this food

Note: This rule does not apply to all nutrients on a food label.

Supplements

If your child does not consistently get enough calcium and vitamin D, then a supplement may be needed. Ask your doctor or pharmacist for recommendations.

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or dietitian if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.