

CALCIUM FACTS

NEW-LIFESTYLES STEPS TO A HEALTHIER YOUSM

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When it comes to important minerals the human body can't be without, calcium is at the top of the list. The most abundant mineral in the human body, calcium supports the structure of our bones and teeth.

1. What is osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis is a disease in which bones become fragile and more likely to break. If not prevented or if left untreated, osteoporosis can progress painlessly until a bone breaks. Fractures occur typically in the hip, spine and wrist.

2. What is the link between calcium and osteoporosis?

Calcium is the key to preventing debilitating osteoporosis. A serious health problem for more than 10 million Americans, 80% of whom are women, osteoporosis is a disorder characterized by porous, fragile bones.

Each year in the U.S., osteoporosis causes 1.5 million hip, wrist, pelvis, rib, vertebrae and other bone fractures. Another 34 million Americans have osteopenia, or low bone mass, which precedes osteoporosis.

Women are at highest risk because their skeletons are smaller to start with and because of the accelerated bone loss that accompanies menopause.

3. What can I do to lower my risk of osteoporosis?

We can reduce the risk of osteoporosis and osteopenia later in life by striving to optimize peak bone mass during our teenage years and in early adulthood. We can boost our bone mass by making sure we are getting enough calcium and vitamin D in our diet and by participating in weight-bearing exercise. Weight-bearing means that your muscles and bones are working against gravity. Running, walking, dancing, tennis, hiking, basketball and weight training are only a few examples of how you can take an active role in increasing your bone mass!



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Strengthen your bones and empower your life with calcium!

4. Why is vitamin D always mentioned along with calcium supplements?

Vitamin D helps improve calcium absorption. Your body can obtain vitamin D from food, and it can also make vitamin D when your skin is exposed to sunlight.

5. How much calcium do I need each day?

It is generally recommended that adults have 800 mg/day or three servings of high calcium foods, children and teens ages 9-18 have 1300 mg/day or four servings of high calcium foods and children ages 4-8 have 800 mg/day or three servings of high calcium foods.

6. Can dairy products help me to lose weight?

You may have heard the American Dietetic Association and National Dairy Council's recent TV ads encouraging everyone to try "milking your diet." This means drinking 24 ounces of milk every 24 hours to use the benefits of calcium as added support for healthy effective weight loss.

While the true weight-loss benefits are still being debated, emerging research suggests that calcium found in dairy products like milk and yogurt may help to regulate body fat.

By drinking a glass of low-fat or fat-free milk with each meal, you are not only giving your body the calcium it needs for healthy bones and teeth, but you are also promoting the loss of body fat while maintaining muscle. It's a win-win situation!

Strategies for extra calcium

- Grab a shake or yogurt smoothie.
- Drink skim milk with at least two of your meals.
- Add cheese and/or broccoli to pasta, potatoes and salads.
- Add a few tablespoons of powdered milk, low-fat or fat-free milk to pancakes, potatoes and pudding.
- Use milk to make hot cocoa, hot cereal and soup.

7. Do I need to increase my intake of calcium while I'm pregnant?

Current calcium recommendations for non-pregnant women are also sufficient for pregnant women because intestinal calcium absorption increases during pregnancy. For this reason, the calcium recommendations established for pregnant women are not different than the recommendations for women who are not pregnant. The recommendation for adults is 800 mg/day or three servings of high calcium foods.



Although dairy products are the main source of calcium in the U.S. diet, you can also find calcium in Chinese cabbage, kale, almonds and broccoli and in several calcium-fortified food products, including fruit juices, fruit drinks, tofu, breads and cereals.

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