



National Osteoporosis Foundation

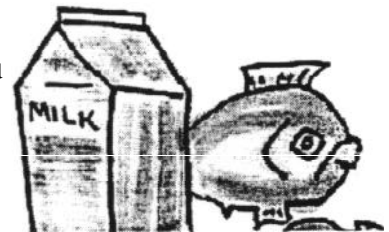
How Calcium Helps

Calcium plays an important role in maintaining bone. Calcium alone cannot prevent or cure osteoporosis, but it is an important part of an overall prevention or treatment program. Yet, national surveys have shown that many Americans are not consuming enough calcium. Many women, in fact, consume less than half of the daily recommended amount of calcium.

Recommended Calcium Intakes*	
	Amount mg/day
Children & Young Adults	
1-10 years	800 - 1,200
11-24 years	1,200 - 1,500
Adult Women	
Pregnant & Lactating	1,200 - 1,500
25-49 years (premenopausal)	1,000
50-64 years (postmenopausal) taking estrogen	1,000
50-64 years (postmenopausal) not taking estrogen	1,500
65+ years	1,500
Adult Men	
25-64 years	1,000
65+ years	1,500

*Source: National Institutes of Health **Consensus** Panel, Optimal Calcium Intake, 1994

One way to increase the amount of calcium in your diet is to eat calcium-rich foods like low-fat milk, cheese, broccoli, and others. If you are unable to get enough calcium through your diet, your doctor can recommend an appropriate calcium supplement. Since there are several different types of calcium and a **variety** of supplements available, you should discuss the choice of calcium with your doctor.



The calcium in supplements needs to be easily absorbed by the body. You can be sure of this if the tablet dissolves almost entirely in a small glass of warm water or vinegar within 30 minutes. Also read the label to determine the actual amount of calcium in the supplement, which is usually referred to as elemental calcium.



Some people are lactose intolerant and have difficulty digesting dairy products because they lack the enzyme lactase, which is needed to break down the milk sugar lactose. Milk fermented with certain bacteria (called acidophilus) is well tolerated, as are yogurt and hard cheeses. If you are lactose intolerant, you can treat lactose-containing foods with commercial preparations of lactase or buy milk products that have already been treated.

Getting enough calcium, whether through diet or supplements, is essential to maintaining bone strength and can play a vital role in preventing osteoporosis-related fractures. Speak to a doctor or dietitian about how you can get the proper amount of calcium.