

Allergy and Immunology

Calcium

Calcium is a mineral that is important for strong bones and teeth. Low calcium intakes have been linked to osteoporosis in later life.

The major sources of calcium in most Western diets are dairy products such as milk, yoghurt and cheese. Other good sources of calcium are bony fish (canned salmon and sardines), almonds, fortified soy products and fortified rice beverages. Small quantities of calcium can be found in other nuts, some dried fruits, sesame seeds and green leafy vegetables (spinach, parsley).

Milk allergy is the most common food allergy affecting young children. A large number of children with milk allergy also have soy allergy so obtaining enough calcium from other dietary sources can be difficult.

The table below lists the calcium content of a number of foods.

1 serve of calcium is equal to 250mg. The following amounts of food provide on average one serve of calcium.

Food Product	Serve size = 1 serve of calcium (250mg)
Cow's milk	200mls or 1 cup
Yoghurt	200g or 1 regular tub
Cheese	35g or 2 cheese slices
Fortified soy milk	200mls or 1 cup
Soy yoghurt	200g or 1 regular tub
Soy cheese	125g – 400g (varies)
Fortified rice beverage	200mls or 1 cup
Almonds	100g
Tahini	75g
Dried figs	125g
Bony fish (must eat bones)	75g
White sesame seeds	400g
Boiled spinach and raw parsley	150g
Milk chocolate	100g
Breast milk	700mls
Infant formula – Step 1 From birth	500mls
Infant formula – Step 2 Follow On	300-350mls
Toddler Formula – Step 3	200mls or 1 cup
Soy formula	400mls
Peptijunior, Alfare and Neocate formulae	500mls
Neocate Advance formula	220mls or 1 cup
Elecare formula - < 12 mths of age	300mls
Elecare formula - > 12 mths age	200mls or 1 cup

Calcium needs change with age. Below is a table with the recommended daily intake or RDI of calcium for children and adults and the number of serves of calcium needed to provide the RDI. 1 serve = 250mg Calcium.

Age	Calcium requirement per day (mg) or RDI	Number of serves per day
1-3yr	500	2
4-8	700	3
9-13	1000-1300	4-5
14-18	1300	5
Breastfeeding women	1000	4

CALCIUM SUPPLEMENTS

Calcium supplements are available over the counter at chemists and supermarkets. They are used to supplement the diet if the dietary intake of calcium is low.

Some of the available supplements are listed below. Ask your pharmacist for more information.

Supplement Name	Description	Calcium Amount	Other
Actical	Vanilla flavoured chewable tablet	200mg/tablet	Vit D 100IU
Andrews Tums	Orange flavoured chewable tablet	200mg/tablet	
Blackmores –Bio Calcium	Spearmint flavoured chewable tablet	350mg/tablet	
Nature's Way Kids Calcium	Strawberry flavoured chewable burstlet	200mg/tablet	
Nature's Way Calcium and Vitamin D (Vita Gummies)	Vanilla flavoured chewable bears	90mg/tablet	Vit D 100IU
Calcia Extra Strength	Chewable orange flavoured tablet	1000mg/tablet	
Caltrate	Chalky tablet that can be crushed and added to foods or swallowed whole	600mg/tablet	
Cal-sup	Spearmint flavoured chewable tablet	500mg/tablet	
Calsource	Dissolvable tablet	1000mg/tablet	
Calvid	Orange flavoured dissolvable granules	1000mg/sachet	Vit D 880IU
Osteo Vit-D and Calcium	Chewable vanilla flavoured tablet	600mg/tablet	Vit D 1000IU