

More calcium for women over 50

In the Kitchen
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There has been a lot of information in the press recently linking calcium intake with osteoporosis, a debilitating bone condition that affects one in four women over the age of 50. As a result, many women are concerned about their calcium intake.

Calcium is important in the prevention of osteoporosis because it helps to build and maintain strong bones. About 99 per cent of the calcium in your body is stored in your bones. The remainder circulates throughout the body to regulate body functions like nerve and muscle activity, blood clotting and heart contractions. The body needs a constant level of this mineral in the bloodstream. If you don't get enough calcium in your diet, calcium is gradually drawn from the bones into the bloodstream eventually leaving them brittle, porous and susceptible to fractures.

Milk is the best source of calcium in the diet. It contains added vitamin D and lactose (milk sugar) which helps with the absorption of calcium. If you drink home pasteurized milk, see your doctor about taking vitamin D supplements.

All dairy products, with the exception of cream cheese, butter, whipping cream, and cream are a good source of calcium. Select low-fat milk and milk products if you are concerned about calories. They provide the same amount of calcium but less calories.

If you experience stomach aches, bloating or diarrhea after drinking milk, you may be lactose intolerant. Instead of drinking milk, try eating buttermilk, cheese and yogurt. Another option is "Lacteeze", lactose-reduced 2% milk specifically designed for people with lactose intolerance.

If you don't drink milk or eat milk products, it is difficult to obtain your recommended daily calcium intake which is 700 mg for women 16 to 49 years old, 800 mg for women 50 years

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SOURCES OF CALCIUM

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| FOODS | CALCIUM |
|------------------------------------|---------|
| Milk and milk products | |
| 250 mL whole milk | 307 mg |
| 250 mL 2% milk | 314 mg |
| 250 mL skim milk | 318 mg |
| 250 mL chocolate milk | 296 mg |
| 45 g brick | 303 mg |
| 45 g camembert | 174 mg |
| 45 g Cheddar | 324 mg |
| 250 mL cottage cheese, creamed | 142 mg |
| 250 mL cottage cheese, dried curd | 67 mg |
| 45 g mozzarella partly skim | 329 mg |
| 45 g Swiss | 432 mg |
| 45 g processed cheese | 277 mg |
| 175 mL plain yogurt | 348 mg |
| 175 mL fruit flavored yogurt | 266 mg |
| Legumes | |
| 250 mL white beans, uncooked | 95 mg |
| 250 mL red kidney beans, cooked | 102 mg |
| 250 mL soy bean, uncooked | 115 mg |
| 125 mL soy bean, curd | 45 mg |
| Nuts | |
| 125 mL almonds | 175 mg |
| 125 mL Brazil | 128 mg |
| Fruits and Vegetables | |
| 125 mL beet greens, cooked | 75 mg |
| 125 mL broccoli, cooked | 72 mg |
| 125 mL spinach, cooked | 88 mg |
| 125 mL rhubarb, cooked | 208 mg |
| Fish | |
| 1/2 - 220 g can salmon with bone | 284 mg |
| 7 medium sardines with bones | 393 mg |
| 6 scallops | 115 mg |
| Bread and Cereals | |
| 2 slices whole wheat bread | 100 mg |
| 1 medium corn muffin | 96 mg |
| 1 medium waffle | 76 mg |
| Combination Foods | |
| 250 mL baked beans, canned | 146 mg |
| 125 mL baked custard | 147 mg |
| 250 mL chili con carne with beans | 84 mg |
| 250 mL lasagne, homemade | 129 mg |
| 250 mL macaroni & cheese, homemade | 418 mg |
| 1/8 medium cheese pizza, homemade | 166 mg |
| 125 mL rice pudding, homemade | 100 mg |

Reference: Dairy Bureau of Canada, Calcium — Your Many Source Book, 1985

