

The Importance of Vitamin D

Vitamin D has numerous benefits to your overall health, including:

- Helps your body absorb calcium
- Bone growth and maintaining bone strength
- Nerve and muscle functioning
- Maintaining a strong immune system

The “Sunshine” Vitamin

Vitamin D is made by your skin when it is exposed to sunlight. Some people may not be able to make enough vitamin D and may need supplements, including:

- Older adults
- People with dark skin
- People living in the northern half of the United States (where sun rays are not as strong during the winter months)
- Those with limited sun exposure

How Much Vitamin D Do I Need?

Age	Adequate Intakes
Up to 13 years	600 IU/day
14 - 18 years	600 UI/day
19 - 50 years	600 IU/day
51 - 70 years	600 IU/day
71 + years	800 IU/day

* IU = International Units

Check with your doctor to determine the optimal amount for you.

Where Do I Get Vitamin D?



Cod liver oil, 1 Tbsp	1,360 IU
Salmon, 3.5 oz cooked	360 IU
Mackerel, 3.5 oz cooked	345 IU
Sardines, canned in oil, 1.75 oz	250 IU
Tuna fish, canned in oil, 3 oz	200 IU
Milk, vitamin D-fortified, 1 cup	98 IU
Yogurt, vitamin D-fortified, 6 oz	80 IU
Margarine, vitamin D-fortified, 1 Tbsp	60 IU
Dry cereal, vitamin D-fortified, 1 cup	40 IU
Egg, 1 whole	20 IU
Beef liver, 3.5 oz cooked	15 IU

* IU = International Units

Simple Ways To Get More Vitamin D

- Start your day off with a bowl of Vitamin D fortified cereal with low-fat or skim milk.
- Eat a tuna sandwich for lunch.
- Top salads with chunks of canned tuna or salmon.
- Buy orange juice or yogurt fortified with vitamin D. Check the labels!
- Talk to your health care provider about taking a vitamin D supplement or a multivitamin containing vitamin D during the winter months.

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Saint Paul – Ramsey County Public Health
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Feeding Your Bones



Calcium & Vitamin D:

Essential for Growing Strong Bones and Keeping Them Strong

The Importance of Calcium

People of all ages and ethnicities need to eat food with calcium to:

- Build and maintain strong bones and teeth
- Protect against loss of bone tissue (osteoporosis)
- Support heart and muscle function
- Control blood pressure
- Protect against colon cancer

How Much Calcium Do I Need?

The amount of calcium you need varies throughout your life. Children and women who are pregnant or breastfeeding need more.

Women	3–4 servings a day
Men	2–3 servings a day
Teens	4 servings a day
Children (up to 9 years)	2 servings a day (can be divided into smaller servings throughout the day)

Age	Adequate Intakes
1 – 3 years	700 mg/day
4 – 8 years	1000 mg/day
9 – 18 years	1,300 mg/day
19 – 50 years	1,000 mg/day
51+ years	1,200 mg/day
During pregnancy or lactation	1,000-1,300 mg/day

* mg = milligrams

Where Do I Get Calcium?



Food	Serving Size	Amount of Calcium
Dry cereal, calcium-fortified	1 cup	100-1000 mg
Soy milk, calcium-fortified	1 cup	80-500 mg
Yogurt, low-fat	8 oz	284-415 mg
Sardines, with bones	3 oz	324 mg
Skim, 2% or whole milk	8 oz	275-306 mg
Cheese Cheese, shredded	1.5 oz 1/3 cup	275-306 mg
Orange juice, calcium-fortified	6 oz	200-260 mg
Tofu with calcium sulfate	1/2 cup	138-204 mg
Salmon, pink, canned with bones	3 oz	181 mg
Instant pudding	1/2 cup	153 mg
Spinach, cooked	1/2 cup	120 mg
Frozen yogurt or ice cream	1/2 cup	85-103 mg
Kale or Chinese cabbage, cooked	1 cup	74-94 mg
Low-fat cottage cheese	1/2 cup	75 mg
Broccoli, raw	1/2 cup	21 mg

What Are Some Simple Ways To Increase My Calcium Intake?

- Drink low-fat or skim milk with meals.
- Add cheese to sandwiches, soups and salads.
- Use milk instead of water to prepare soups, sauces and hot cereals.
- Look for fruit juices, breakfast cereals, pasta, and breads that are labeled “calcium rich,” “calcium added” or “more calcium”.
- Use low-fat plain yogurt mixed with herbs as a vegetable dip.
- Prepare a fruit smoothie made with low-fat yogurt for breakfast, a snack or dessert.

Calcium Supplements

Your body absorbs calcium from food better than it does from supplements. Eat at least 3 servings of calcium-rich foods every day!

Some people may not be able to get enough calcium from food, including vegetarians.

Calcium supplements are available at the pharmacy or grocery store.

- *Calcium carbonate* is less expensive and should be taken with food for best absorption.
- *Calcium citrate* is absorbed by the body more easily. It may be taken with or without food and is recommended for older adults.

Look for a calcium supplement that contains vitamin D.