

CALCIUM

Why is adequate calcium important to my bone health?

Adequate calcium intake is essential to good bone health and should be included in both an osteoporosis prevention and an osteoporosis treatment program. Ninety nine percent of the calcium in the body is found in the bones and teeth. The remainder regulates important functions such as muscle movement, heart rhythm and blood clotting.

To stay strong, bone tissue must renew itself by constantly removing old bone and replacing it with new bone. Daily calcium intake is required to build that new bone. When too much bone is removed or not enough new bone is built, bones weaken and are more likely to break. This imbalance can result in osteoporosis.

How can I get the calcium I need daily?

Ideally calcium can be obtained by eating calcium rich foods. Many foods, particularly dairy products and dark leafy green vegetables, can provide calcium in the diet. However weight management, busy lifestyles and lactose intolerance can make it difficult to meet calcium requirements through diet. Supplements can be used to help meet those needs.

What should I look for in a calcium supplement?

Calcium supplements come in many forms: tablets, capsules, liquids and chewables. Most calcium preparations are calcium carbonate or calcium citrate. Many contain Vitamin D, which is essential for the absorption of calcium. Other vitamins and minerals are often added to calcium. Check with your healthcare provider for advice regarding these additives. It is not necessary to spend a lot to get a quality product. Look for the USP symbol on the label. This means the manufacturer has voluntarily submitted the product for standardized testing to assure its quality. There are other quality calcium products without this label, so buy well-known brands. Some oyster shell and dolomite calcium sources may be contaminated with lead.

Guidelines For Getting the Most From Calcium Supplements

- The National Academy of Science and the National Osteoporosis Foundation recommend 1000/1200 mg/day of calcium for adult men and women
- Supplements should be divided throughout the day so that no more than 500-600 mg are taken at each dose.
- Take calcium supplements with meals for best absorption.
- Look carefully at labeling to find the serving size and how many mg of calcium are in that serving. This can be used to determine how many tablets are needed daily.
- If constipation or gas are a problem; try different products, drink plenty of water and start with smaller daily doses gradually adding more until the recommended amount is reached.



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