



Healthy Eating: Calcium¹

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Why Is Calcium Important?

Calcium is the major mineral found in your bones and teeth. Many older adults don't get enough calcium from the foods they eat. This can lead to bone loss and the bone disease **osteoporosis**. Osteoporosis puts people at high risk for bone fractures.

What Foods Contain Calcium?

- Dairy products (milk, yogurt, cheese, and ice cream)
- Kale and many other greens
- Romaine lettuce
- Broccoli
- Legumes, such as kidney beans and lentils
- Tofu (fortified)
- Canned fish with bones

How Much Calcium Do I Need?

The recommended daily intake of calcium for women 51 years of age and older is **1,200** milligrams. Men age 51–70 need **1,000** milligrams, and those older than 70 need **1,200** milligrams of calcium each day.

If you are not getting enough calcium from foods, you may need to take a calcium supplement. Talk to your doctor or a registered dietitian for more information.



Figure 1. Credit: iStockphoto

Table 1. Good sources of calcium

Food	Calcium (mg/serving)*
Yogurt, low fat, fruit, 1 cup	350
Sardines, canned, 3 ounces	325
Soy milk (fortified), 1 cup	300
Milk, low fat (1%), 1 cup	300
Orange juice (fortified), ¾ cup	260
Kale, cooked, ½ cup	85
Kidney beans, canned, drained, ½ cup	60
*(mg = milligrams)	

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^{1.} La versión español de este documento es *Alimentación Saludable: Calcio* (FCS8561-Span). This document is FCS8561, one of a series of the Department of Family, Youth, and Community Sciences, UF/IFAS Extension. First published: March 2000. Latest revision: June 2013. Please visit the EDIS website at http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu.

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