

# Healthy Eating: Calcium<sup>1</sup>

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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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