



Worksheet to Find Out How Much Calcium You Need Each Day

Step 1. Know How Much Calcium You Need Each Day

For strong bones for life, you need a certain amount of calcium every day. This is your “recommended daily calcium intake.” Find how much you need by reading this chart.

Your Age	Your daily Calcium requirement (milligrams=mg)
Birth to 12 months	Supplied by formula or breast milk
1 – 3 years	700mg*
4 – 8 years	1000mg*
9 – 18 years	1300mg*
Men 19 – 70 years Women 19 – 50 years	1000mg*
Women 51 – 70 years and Men & women 71+_ years	1200mg*

*Recommended Dietary Allowances, Institute of Medicine, 2010

It is rare, but some people who take medicine may need slightly more calcium than listed above. This is also true for people with a medical condition. Be sure to talk with your health care provider. Find out if you need more calcium for these reasons.

Step 2. Estimate the Calcium in the Foods You Eat in a Usual Day

The amount of calcium in foods varies depending on the brands you buy. It is important to read labels.

Do your food labels list calcium content in milligrams (mg) per serving? If so, add up the milligrams to find out how much calcium you take in each day.

If your food labels list calcium content in percent daily value (%DV), drop the % and replace it with a “0.” This will help you find out how many mg of calcium you get in each serving. For example: 20% calcium=200 mg calcium.

For the foods listed below, fill in the number of servings you eat on a usual day.

Foods	Servings per day (fill in 1, 2 & 3)	Calcium (mg per serving)	Calcium (mg per day)
Milk: 30% daily value per serving	1.	Multiply number of servings by 300	= _____mg +
Yogurt: 20 to 35% daily value per serving	2.	Multiply number of servings by 200 to 350	= _____mg +
½ cup broccoli or ½ cup of most dried beans: 50 mg per serving	3.	Multiply number of servings by 50	= _____mg +
Calcium intake from other foods per day: 250 mg	—	—	= 250 mg +
—	—	Total estimated daily calcium intake in the foods you eat	Total= _____mg

Step 3. Figure out How much Calcium you Need

For strong bones for life, you need the recommended daily calcium intake.

Take Your Recommended Daily Calcium Intake (from Step 1) _____ mg

Subtract Your Estimated Daily Calcium in the Foods You Eat (from Step 2) — _____ mg

Equals = Additional Calcium Needed = _____ mg

- Food is the best source of calcium. If you take in less calcium than recommended, first try to eat more calcium-rich foods. This will help you get the additional calcium you need each day.
- Your body uses calcium best if you take in just 600 mg or less at one time. It is best to spread out the calcium you eat. Choose a calcium-rich food at each meal.
- More calcium is not better. If you get the recommended amount of calcium from the foods you eat each day, you do not need a calcium supplement. Supplements should be taken only when it is too hard to get enough calcium from food alone.
- Are you considering a calcium supplement? Talk with your health care provider to pick the amount and type of calcium that is right for you.

Step 4. Estimate Your Total Daily Calcium Intake (If You Take Supplements)

1. Estimated Daily Calcium in the Foods You Eat (from Step 2) _____ mg

2. Calcium from Calcium Supplements _____ mg

3. Calcium from Vitamins _____ mg

4. Estimated Total Daily Calcium Intake (Add 1+2+3) _____ mg