

Calcium

What is calcium?

- Calcium is essential for strong bones and teeth.
- Calcium also plays an important role in heart, muscle, blood, and nervous system function.
- Without enough calcium in your diet, your body will withdraw calcium from your bones. Over time, your bones become brittle, and you may develop osteoporosis.

Dairy facts:

1. Dairy is not high in sugar

Unflavoured milk, yoghurt and cheese do not contain added sugar, but they do contain a natural sugar called lactose. Unless you are lactose intolerant, this type of sugar is perfectly healthy in a balanced diet.

2. Dairy does not cause weight gain

Weight loss diets should include dairy in order to meet nutrient needs. Research has shown that people who include at least 3 serves of milk, yoghurt and/or cheese a day in a calorie-controlled diet lose more weight than those who eat less dairy foods.

3. People who are lactose intolerant can still consume dairy products

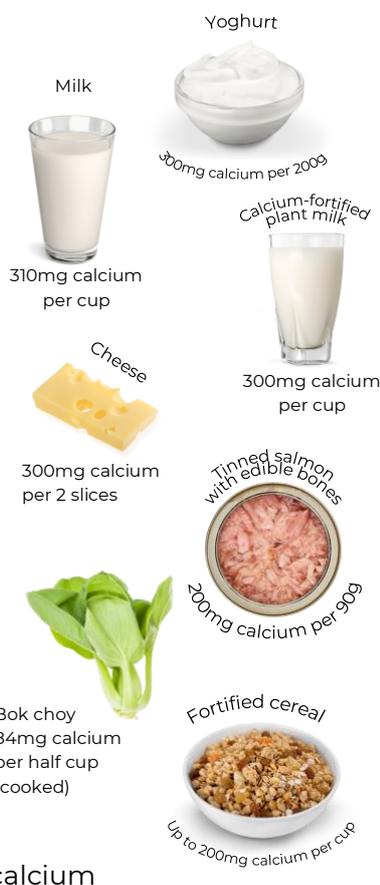
Lactose intolerant does not mean dairy intolerant. Hard cheeses and cultured dairy products, such as yoghurt, are generally well-tolerated by people with lactose intolerance. Lactose free milk is also a good option.

99% of calcium is stored in bones and teeth, 1% in blood

Calcium rich food and drinks:

How to increase your calcium intake

- Have yoghurt as a side dish with meals or make yoghurt-based dips
- Have a smoothie made with milk and yoghurt or cheese and crackers as a snack
- Add cheese to pancakes, omelettes, casseroles, pasta and vegetable dishes
- Add milk or milk powder to casseroles, soups and sauces
- Enjoy salmon and green leafy vegetables for dinner
- Check that non-dairy sources are fortified with calcium



DID YOU KNOW?

- Calcium is absorbed at different rates from different foods. This is called 'bioavailability.'
- Milk, yoghurt, cheese, and most calcium-fortified soy milks have good bioavailability.
- One cup of milk, for example, contains 310mg of calcium and 100mg of it is absorbed – it has good bioavailability.
- Half a cup of cooked spinach on the other hand contains 129mg of calcium but only 7mg of it is absorbed – it has low bioavailability.



One cup (250ml) milk = 310mg calcium, 100mg of this is absorbed



1/2 cup cooked spinach = 129mg calcium, 7mg calcium absorbed

Less than half of all Australian adults get their recommended daily intake of calcium