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## Calcium Supplements

**Why did I hear that calcium supplements can be dangerous?** A recent study was misunderstood by the public media. It stated that there was a possible link between calcium supplements and calcium deposited on the heart vessels. Better designed recent studies found out this MAY be true for people with **advanced** kidney disease, but not in the general population. Those individuals, and about 8% of people who absorb calcium extremely well, may be at increased risk of kidney stones if their **TOTAL** calcium intake from all sources is over the recommended amounts.

Calcium is essential to regulate heart function, conduct nerve impulses, secret hormones and clot blood. If the body does not get enough calcium EVERY DAY, it will take what it needs from the bones. Premenopausal women, including those who are pregnant, need 1000 mg a day. Post menopausal women, even those on hormone replacement, need 1200 mg every day. **THAT INCLUDES DIET PLUS SUPPLEMENTS.** More is not better.

Most diets have plenty of magnesium and phosphorus. Extra Vitamin K2 is only needed for people with intestinal issues such as celiac disease, Crohn's disease or surgical shortening of the intestine.

### Calcium supplements come in 3 Types:

**Calcium carbonate** is the cheapest type and found in most multivitamins. It is also what is usually added to foods such as soy or almond milk or orange juice. It is about 60% absorbed as long as it is not taken with medication that decrease stomach acid.

**Calcium citrate** is a better choice for anyone taking drugs such as Prilosec, Pepcid or Zantac

**Calcium phosphate** is the most expensive supplement and hardest to find (brand Posture D). It is the form found in dairy products and is 80% absorbed, causing less constipation and gas.

Avoid any calcium that is not certified by USP label or states "purified" calcium from unrefined oyster shell, bone meal, or dolomite without the USP symbol, because it often contains unacceptable levels of lead, mercury and other toxic metals.

Once you figure out how much calcium you get in food sources, you can calculate if you need any supplements. Every day may vary. It is fine to take a supplement on days your food calcium levels are low and not take it when they are higher.

## The Best Sources of Calcium from Food

<b>DAIRY</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Calcium in mg</b>
Milk, nonfat (powdered)	¼ cup	377
Milk, skim, Lactaid, whole, 1% - 2%	1 cup	300
Yogurt, plain (lowfat)	1 cup	415
Yogurt, fruit flavored (lowfat)	1 cup	314
Cheese, Swiss	1 ounce	272
Cheese, Monterey Jack	1 ounce	212
Cheese, Mozzarella (low moisture, part skim)	1 ounce	207
Cheese, Cheddar	1 ounce	204
Cheese, Parmesan (grated)	1 tablespoon	69
Cottage Cheese	½ cup	63
Ice Cream	½ cup	84
<b>Fruits and Vegetables</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Calcium in mg</b>
Collards, cooked from frozen	½ cup	179
Turnip greens, cooked from frozen	½ cup	125
Kale, cooked from frozen	½ cup	90
Broccoli	½ cup	47
Chard, cooked	½ cup	51
Orange	1 medium	52
<b>Protein</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Calcium in mg</b>
Sardines (canned with bones)	3 ounces	322
Salmon, pink (canned with bones)	3 ounces	181
Tofu, firm (processed with calcium)	½ cup	258
Almonds, shelled	1 ounce	80
Soybeans, cooked	½ cup	88
Dried beans, cooked (lima, navy, kidney)	½ cup	25-64
<b>Calcium-Fortified Foods</b>		<b>Check labels</b>