

Calcium Fact Sheet

Calcium is a mineral your body needs every day to stay strong and work properly. Most of the calcium in your body is stored in your bones and teeth, where it keeps them strong and healthy. A small amount is also used in the blood for important jobs like helping your muscles move, your heart beat, and your nerves send messages.

If you don't get enough calcium from food, your body takes it from your bones. Over time, this can make bones weaker and more likely to break. That's why it's important to eat calcium-rich foods regularly, especially during childhood, the teenage years, and early adulthood when bones are still building strength.

Coeliac disease can make it harder for the body to absorb calcium. This is because gluten damages the lining of the small intestine, where calcium is taken into the body. If the gut is not healthy, less calcium is absorbed, even if you are eating enough.

In Australia the recommended daily dietary intake of calcium is:

	INFANTS				
	Breastfed 0-6 months	Formulae fed 0-6 months	7-12 months	1-3 years	4-8 years
Calcium (mg)	210	350	270	500	700

	BOYS		GIRLS			
	8-11 yrs	12-18 yrs	9-11 yrs	12-18 yrs	Pregnant	Lactating
Calcium (mg)	1 000	1 300	1 000	1 300	1 300	1 300

	MEN		WOMEN			
	19-70 yrs	70+ yrs	19-50 yrs	50+ yrs	Pregnant	Lactating
Calcium (mg)	1 000	1 300	1 000	1 300	1 000	1 000

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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Approximate quantities of Calcium in foods

Food Per Average Serving Size	Calcium (mg)	Food Per Average Serving Size	Calcium (mg)
Yoghurt plain, 200g	364	Frozen Yoghurt, ½ cup	120
Sardines (with bones), 50g	362	Tofu, regular, 100g	110
Swiss or Gruyere cheese, 40g	354	Tinned salmon (with bones), 50g	95
Yoghurt, flavoured, 200g	312	Anchovies (with bones) 50g	84
Tofu, calcium set, 100g	>300	Almonds, 30g	80
Low fat milk, 250ml	298	Cottage cheese, ½ cup (100g)	70
Soy beverage, calcium fortified, 1 cup (250ml)	295	Almond butter, 30g	65
Haloumi cheese 40g	280	Bok Choy ½ cup cooked	62
Mozzarella, 40g	274	Figs, dried, uncooked, 30g	60
Regular milk, 250ml (1 cup)	272	Pinto beans, 150g	52
Cheddar, Colby, tasty, 40g	235	Amaranth, cooked, 1 cup	47
Parmesan, 1 Tbsp	190	Spinach, 75g cooked (½ cup)	44
Brie, 40g	184	Vanilla ice-cream 75g	38
Tahini, 50g	165	Cream cheese, 40g (2 Tbsp)	28
Soybeans, 1 cup cooked	140	Walnuts, 30g	27
White sauce, ½ cup	131	Quinoa, cooked 1 cup	21
Custard, 100g	129	Broccoli, ½ cup cooked (75g)	20
Feta cheese, 40g	126	Hummus 30g	15

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The good news is that following a strict gluten-free diet helps the gut heal, improving calcium absorption. Eating calcium-rich foods like milk, yoghurt, cheese, fortified plant milks, and some leafy greens can help protect your bones for the long term. Calcium is best absorbed from foods. Supplements may be useful when needed and are often suggested to be taken in divided smaller doses. Supplements are best taken 1 hour after a meal to limit calcium with dietary fibre in the meal. Discuss your needs with your dietitian and healthcare team if considering supplementation.

Calcium needs vary across the lifespan.

Ideas on boosting calcium intake

- Freeze yoghurts before they are put into school lunches
- Freeze yoghurt into ice-cube trays to eat at home
- Freeze yoghurts into icy-pole containers to have at home instead of ice blocks
- Freeze milk poppers to put into school lunches
- Serve cereal and milk for afternoon tea instead of biscuits or chips
- Add cheese to vegetables
- Eat cheese and crackers or cheese and vegetables for snacks
- Make fruit smoothies with milk and yoghurt for breakfast or afternoon tea
- Use corn tortillas or corn/rice cakes to make mini pizzas for afternoon tea topped with cheese
- Add cheese to baked or mashed potatoes
- Use calcium fortified milk replacers: rice, soy or almond milks

References:

Nutrient Reference values for Australia and New Zealand. [Calcium | Eat For Health](#)
Australian Food Composition Database - Release 3.0

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