

Why is calcium needed?

Calcium is a mineral that helps make bones and teeth strong. Without enough calcium, bones can weaken and break easily. Calcium is needed throughout life to prevent a bone disorder called osteoporosis.

- Children with chronic illnesses like arthritis and kidney disease may have continued calcium loss. This can lead to an increased risk of broken bones.
- Some children take medicines, such as prednisone, that may also cause calcium loss.
- It is important for these children to get plenty of calcium or calcium supplements each day.

Why is vitamin D needed?

Vitamin D also plays a key role in bone health. It helps the body to absorb calcium and build bone. Not getting enough vitamin D can harm bone health.

How much calcium does my child need?

Age	Milligrams (mg) each day
Newborn to 6 months old	200 mg
7 to 12 months old	260 mg
1 to 3 years old	700 mg
4 to 8 years old	1,000 mg
9 to 18 years old	1,300 mg
19 years and older	1,000 mg

How much vitamin D does my child need?

Age	International Units (IU) each day
Newborn to 12 months old	400 IU
Older than 1 year old	600 IU

NOTE: the amounts listed for calcium and vitamin D are based on USDA Dietary Reference Intakes.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

Calcium, continued

How do I improve the bone health of my child?

To help improve your child's bone health:

- Include calcium in your child's diet. Give them a mix of the calcium-based foods listed on pages 2 to 5 to meet your child's daily needs.
- Include vitamin D in your child's diet by giving vitamin D-fortified milks or milk alternatives, breakfast cereals and snack bars.
- Have your child play outdoors on sunny days. Sunlight also supplies vitamin D.
- Make sure your child gets regular physical activity like walking, jogging or dancing. This helps to strengthen bones.

What foods should I give my child?

The tables below list foods that you can feed your child.

Excellent sources of calcium	Serving size	Amount of calcium (milligrams)
Cereal, calcium-fortified	½ cup	200 to 670 mg
Cereal bar, calcium-fortified	1 each	300 mg
Cheese: cheddar, mozzarella, muenster	1 ounce (oz)	205 mg
Cheese: provolone, jack, Swiss	1 ounce (oz)	220 mg
Cheese: ricotta, part skim	½ cup	335 mg
Milk, fat free (1%)	1 cup	300 mg
Milk, reduced fat (2%)	1 cup	305 mg
Milk, whole	1 cup	275 mg
Soy or rice milk, calcium-fortified	1 cup	300 to 370 mg
Tofu, fortified with calcium sulfate or lactate	¼ cup	215 mg
Yogurt, fruit or plain	8 ounce (oz)	275 to 450 mg

Good sources of calcium	Serving size	Amount of calcium (milligrams)
Bagel, enriched	1 each	80 mg
Beans, white, canned	½ cup	80 mg
Biscuit	1 each	140 mg

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Calcium, continued

Good sources of calcium	Serving size	Amount of calcium (milligrams)
Cheese, American	1 ounce (oz)	160 mg
Cheese, blue or feta	1 ounce (oz)	145 mg
Cheese, parmesan	2 Tbsp	110 mg
Crab, canned	3 ounces (oz)	80 mg
Cream of wheat, regular	½ cup	80 mg
Dried beans and peas	½ cup	50 to 100 mg
English muffin	1 each	95 mg
Frozen yogurt or ice milk	½ cup	105 mg
Greens, beet	½ cup	80 mg
Greens, collards	½ cup	135 mg
Greens, mustard	½ cup	50 mg
Greens, turnip or bok choy	½ cup	100 mg
Ice cream	½ cup	85 to 110 mg
Instant breakfast drink, prepared with water	1 cup	105 to 250 mg
Kale, frozen	½ cup	90 mg
Kale, raw	1 cup	90 mg
Oatmeal	½ cup	85 mg
Oatmeal: instant, fortified, prepared with water	1 packet	110 mg
Okra	½ cup	90 mg
Orange	1 each	50 mg
Orange juice, calcium fortified	½ cup	175 to 200 mg
Pudding, made from milk	½ cup	155 mg
Soybeans	½ cup	130 mg
Spinach	½ cup	135 mg
Sweet potato, baked with skin	1 medium	55 mg
Tortillas, 6-inch flour	2 each	80 mg
Vegetable or soy patty	1 each	85 mg

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Calcium, continued

Good sources of calcium	Serving size	Amount of calcium (milligrams)
Waffles, 4" frozen	1 each	100 mg
Turnip greens (cooked)	½ cup	100 mg
Salmon, canned with edible bones	2 ounces (oz)	120 mg
Pudding*	½ cup	120 to 300 mg
Drinkable yogurt*	2 to 3 ounces (oz)	100 mg
Spaghetti or lasagna*	1 cup	125 mg
Cheese pizza*	1 slice	100 mg
Fortified waffles	2 waffles	110 mg
Fortified oatmeal	1 packet	100 mg

Fair sources of calcium	Serving size	Amount of calcium (milligrams)
Bread, whole grain or white	1 slice	20 mg
Broccoli	½ cup	30 mg
Broccoli, raw	½ cup	20 mg
Cabbage, Chinese, raw	½ cup	35 mg
Cheese, cream	1 ounce (oz)	20 mg
Egg substitute, liquid	¼ cup	35 mg
Egg, whole	1 large	25 mg
Green beans	½ cup	25 mg
Lentils	½ cup	20 mg
Peas, green, frozen	½ cup	20 mg
Shrimp	3 ounces (oz)	30 mg
Sour cream	2 Tbsp	30 mg
Spinach, raw	1 cup	30 mg
Squash	½ cup	25 mg
Tangerine	1 each	30 mg
Tofu, unfortified	½ cup	20 mg

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Calcium, continued

Fair sources of calcium	Serving size	Amount of calcium (milligrams)
Okra	½ cup	90 mg
Raw broccoli	½ cup	88 mg
Ice cream*	½ cup	85 mg
Lima beans	1 cup	50 mg
Orange	1 medium orange	50 mg
Bread	1 slice	30 to 75 mg

* Foods that may be high in phosphorus

What should I do if my child does not get enough calcium in their diet?

Talk with your child’s doctor or nutritionist about calcium supplements. You can give them to your child each day to help them meet their calcium needs.

Calcium supplements	Amount of calcium	Amount of vitamin D
Tums Regular Strength	500 mg per tablet	None
Tums Extra and Tums Kids	750 mg per tablet	None
Tums Ultra	1,000 mg per tablet	None
Os-Cal Calcium plus D ₃	500 mg per caplet	200 IU per caplet
Caltrate 600 + D	600 mg per tablet	800 IU per tablet
L’il Critters Calcium Gummy Bears	100 mg per bear	110 IU per bear
Viactiv Calcium Soft Chews	500 mg per chew	500 IU per chew

* Check supplement labels for exact calcium content

Who should I call if I have questions about calcium?

Call your child’s doctor or nutritionist if you have questions.

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child’s doctor or a member of your child’s healthcare team about specific care of your child.

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