

Food Sources:

# Calcium

*Calcium is a mineral that is the primary component of bones and teeth. Calcium also participates in communication between cells, aids muscle function, supports blood clotting, and helps regulate heart rhythm.<sup>1,2</sup> The body works very hard to keep a steady calcium level in the blood, even if that means harming bone health.*

When there is not enough calcium in the diet, the body takes this mineral from the bones to maintain a steady blood level and support other critical functions in the body. Over time, calcium depletion in the bones can result in low bone density, called osteopenia. Osteopenia can progress to osteoporosis, which increases the risk of bone fractures.

Calcium is widely available from foods and supplements. Both calcium content and bioavailability should be considered when selecting food and supplemental sources of calcium. Beyond dairy sources, a variety of other foods, including certain vegetables, legumes, seeds, and soy products like tofu, can help you meet your calcium needs when consistently included in the diet. Talk to your functional medicine provider about calcium supplementation, as there are complementary nutrients (including vitamin D, vitamin K, and magnesium) that also support bone health and overall health.<sup>3</sup>

The Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDAs) for calcium are as follows:

- **Females, ages 19-50:** 1,000 milligrams (mg) per day
- **Females, ages 51-70+:** 1,200 mg per day
- **Males, ages 19-70:** 1,000 mg per day
- **Males, ages 71+:** 1,200 mg per day

Food, standard serving size	Average Calcium Content (in milligrams)
Plain yogurt, 8 ounces	415
Canned sardines, 3 ounces	325
Cheddar cheese, 1.5 ounces	300
Milk, reduced fat or 2%, 1 cup	295
Firm tofu, ½ cup	253
Collard greens, 1 cup	198
Canned salmon, 3 ounces	181
Sesame seeds, 2 Tbsp.	175
Kale, 1 cup	94
Broccoli, 1 cup	86
White beans, ½ cup	81
Bok choy, 1 cup	74
Dried figs, ¼ cup	61
Orange, 1 medium	60
Amaranth, ½ cup cooked	58

## REFERENCES

1. Lewis J. Overview of disorders of calcium concentration. In: Merck Manual. Professional version. <https://www.merckmanuals.com/professional/endocrine-and-metabolic-disorders/electrolyte-disorders/overview-of-disorders-of-calcium-concentration?query=calcium#v1150111>. Updated March 2018. Accessed March 18, 2020.
2. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, Office of Dietary Supplements. Calcium. <https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/Calcium-HealthProfessional/>. Updated February 14, 2020. Accessed March 18, 2020.
3. Oregon State University, Linus Pauling Institute. Micronutrient Information Center. Calcium. <https://lpi.oregonstate.edu/mic/minerals/calcium>. Updated September 2017. Accessed March 18, 2020.

