

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please contact us on 020 7288 3182. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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Calcium and Vitamin D

(For Adults)



Vitamin D is needed for absorption of calcium and its utilisation in the body. It also helps to keep bones and teeth healthy.

Vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin. You don't need to take it every day as your body is able to build up stores of it.

Some vitamin D comes from the diet, but we get most of it from the direct action of sunlight on our skin.

In the UK, most people whose skin is exposed to daylight are capable of making enough vitamin D during summer months to last throughout the remaining year.

Foods Containing Vitamin D

- ❖ Milk – with added vitamins & minerals
- ❖ Breakfast cereals - with added vitamins & minerals
- ❖ Eggs
- ❖ Margarine - with added vitamins & minerals
- ❖ Oily Fish – fresh & tinned (E.g. Herrings, mackerel, tuna, salmon, sardines)
- ❖ Ovaltine, Horlicks
- ❖ Liver

(N.B. liver and liver products are not advised during pregnancy. For further advice please ask for information on 'healthy eating during pregnancy')

Calcium Facts

- ❖ Calcium is the most important constituent of the skeleton and it is vital for growing bones and teeth.
- ❖ Our bones are living tissue and are constantly being renewed and replaced by new deposits of bone. This means that we need to look after our skeleton throughout life.
- ❖ Children and teenagers especially need lots of calcium in the diet as this is the period when bones grow and strengthen rapidly. From our mid-twenties the situation begins to change and instead of building bone we begin to lose it. This is part of the natural ageing process and adequate calcium intake is essential to keep bone loss as low as possible.

Eat a balanced, calcium-rich diet

- ❖ Eating three portions of calcium-rich dairy foods every day (3-A-Day) is a smart move to keep your bones and teeth in good shape throughout life.
- ❖ Other sources of calcium, apart from milk and dairy products include white bread, cereal foods, pulses (beans and lentils), green leafy vegetables, dried fruit, nuts and seeds and tinned fish (if you eat the bones!).

How much do I need?

- ❖ The amount of calcium you need varies according to your age group.
- ❖ The calcium requirements are higher during periods of rapid growth, especially during infancy and adolescence as well as during breast feeding.

Recommended Nutrient Intake

Males	11 – 18 years	1000mg/day
	19 – 50 years	700mg/day
	50 years +	700mg/day
Females	11 – 18 years	800mg/day
	19 – 50 years	700mg/day
	50 years +	700mg/day
Breast feeding		1250mg/day

The above recommendations can be achieved by including a variety of the following foods into your everyday diet.

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Milk and Milk Substitutes **CALCIUM CONTENT** per 100mls

Whole milk	=	120mg
Semi-skimmed milk	=	120mg
Skimmed milk	=	120mg
Alpro 1+ (Junior) Milk	=	100mg
Milk Soya sweetened	=	120mg
Milk Soya unsweetened	=	120mg
Rice milk, low fat with added calcium	=	120mg
Oatly™ oat Milk drink	=	120mg
Goats Milk	=	100mg

- **All Organic Soya Milks are not calcium enriched**
- **Rice milks should not be given to children under 4.5 years of age**

Dairy and Alternatives

CALCIUM CONTENT

Cheddar cheese 30g (1oz) (size of matchbox)	=	220mg
Reduced fat cheddar 30g (1oz)	=	250mg
Cottage cheese 90g (3oz) 1 small tub (low fat)	=	115mg
Edam cheese 30g (1oz)	=	240mg
Processed cheese 20g (2/3oz) (1 slice)	=	120mg
Fromage frais 60g (2oz) (1 small pot, low fat)	=	52mg
Mozzarella/Feta Cheese (30g)	=	108mg
Custard (100ml)	=	90mg
Low fat fruit yoghurt 125g (4oz) (1 pot)	=	175mg
Low fat Soya fruit yoghurt 125g (1 pot, calcium enriched)	=	150mg
Ice cream 60g (2oz) (1scoop)	=	60mg
Alpro Soya chocolate shake, low fat 200ml (1 individual carton)	=	150mg

Dairy and Alternatives

CALCIUM CONTENT

Vegetables

Spinach 90g (3oz)(steamed)	=	135mg
Spring Greens 90g (3oz) (boiled)	=	70mg
Watercress 20g (2/3oz) (1/4 of a bunch)	=	35mg
Broccoli 90g (3oz) 2 spears)(boiled)	=	36mg
Baked beans 150g (5oz) 1 small can	=	75mg
Green/French beans 90g (3oz) (boiled)	=	50mg
Tofu (steamed soya bean product) 60g (2oz)	=	300mg

Fruit

Apricots 45g (1½ oz) (5 apricots, semi-dried)	=	40mg
Figs (4 figs, semi-dried)	=	168mg
Oranges 160g (5oz) (1 medium)	=	75mg

Some suggestions for increasing the calcium content of your meals:

For breakfast:

- Use plenty of milk on cereal or to make porridge.
- Glass of fortified fruit juice

For a light meal:

- Sardines on white toast
- Soup with added cheese
- Baked beans on toast
- Jacket potato with cheese

For a main meal:

- Ham with parsley sauce
- Cheese omelette
- main meal served with potatoes mashed with butter/margarine and milk
- Macaroni cheese
- Fish in white sauce
- Stir fry with shellfish or tofu

Include a range of vegetables, particularly green leafy vegetables with meals.

For dessert:

- Milky pudding
- Yoghurts
- Ice-cream
- Cheese and biscuits

For snacks:

- Nuts
- Dried fruits
- Occasional milk chocolate
- Cheese and crackers
- Yoghurts

For drinks:

- Hot chocolate
- Malted milk drink / milky coffee

Who needs to take calcium supplements?

- ❖ Most people don't need to take calcium supplements. All the calcium we need can usually be obtained by eating 3-A-Day of milk and dairy products as part of a healthy balanced diet.
- ❖ There are however some individuals who may need to take calcium supplements because they do not eat dairy foods e.g. vegans or individuals who have medically diagnosed milk allergy or intolerance.
- ❖ If you are unable to maintain a good intake of calcium in the diet then your doctor or dietitian will be able to advise you about calcium supplements.

For more information speak to you doctor or dietitian