

Calcium – Essential for Bones

Calcium is the most abundant mineral in the human body, with 90+% of it located in the bones and teeth. It is one of the key minerals for maintaining bone density before, during and after menopause. Menstruating women need at least three serves of calcium rich foods per day, whilst post –menopausal women need 4-5 serves. The following table gives quantities of foods that provide a 'serve' of calcium.

High Calcium, low kilojoule foods	Calcium (mg)	High Calcium, low kilojoule foods	Calcium (mg)
1 ¼ cups cooked spinach or other greens	300	1 ½ cups full cream milk	300
2 cups cooked broccoli	300	1 ¼ cups of plain yoghurt	300
2/3 cup plain low-fat yoghurt	300	200 g tofu	300
1 cup buttermilk	300	1 small standard can of sardines	300
¼ cup grated parmesan cheese	300	300 g can salmon	300
50g Swiss or cheddar cheese	300	2 cups low-fat cottage cheese	300

Recommended Daily Allowance (varies with age)

Infants	350-550mg	Pregnant / breastfeeding women	1300-1500mg
Children aged 1-10 years	800mg	Adult women	800-1000mg
Teenagers	1200mg	Post-menopausal women	1500mg

How to check on calcium intake

It is easy to check your dietary intake of calcium using a diet diary of everything eaten and drunk over one week. Use the following table to add up totals from every day then calculate a daily average. If you are not getting enough calcium, increase the serves of calcium-rich foods, or take a supplement.

Sources of Calcium (mg of calcium per 100 gms or mls of food) Figures estimated. Check labels.

Dairy Products	Soy Products	Meats
Skim Milk powder	Soy milk	All meat has < 20 mg/100 g
Whole Milk Powder	Soy grits	Legumes (cooked)
Whey Powder	Dried soy beans	Navy beans
Yoghurt – cows	Soy flour	Chickpeas & kidney beans
Goats Milk	Tofu	Lentils
Skimmed cows milk	Nuts	Black eyed beans
Buttermilk	Almonds	Split peas
Cows milk – whole	Brazil	Sprouts
Human milk	Pistachio	Alfalfa sprouts
Cheese	Pecan	Mung bean sprouts
Parmesan	Walnuts	Vegetables
Gruyere	Macadamia	Parsley
Mozzarella	Hazelnuts	Watercress
Cheddar	Peanut butter and cashews	Rocket & dark salad leaves
Gouda	Seeds	Spring onions
Edam	Unhulled sesame seeds	Onions
Fetta	Linseeds	Spinach
Ricotta	Hulled sesame seeds	Broccoli
Cottage	Sunflower seeds	Silverbeet
Eggs	Pumpkin seeds	Fruits
Duck (whole)	Grains and Cereals	Dried figs
Chicken (whole)	White Self raising flour	Lemons
Fish	Muesli (depends on brand)	Rhubarb (stewed)
Whitebait	Wheat bran	Orange juice
Sardines (canned)	Bread (white of brown)	Blackberries
Salmon (canned)	Rice bran & wheat germ	Other
Lobster	Oatmeal	Crude molasses
	Brown rice	Brewer's Yeast
	Wheat or rye crispbread	
		654
		210

Sources of Calcium, cont.

The best food source of calcium is actually Kelp (a seaweed). It contains 1093mg of calcium per 100g. Below are some of the main sources of calcium. Please note the comparison between cow's milk (listed first) and other calcium-rich alternatives.

- Cow's milk 291mg/cup
- Almonds 332mg/cup
- Hazelnuts 282mg/cup
- Black strap molasses 137mg/cup
- Chick peas 150mg/cup
- Tofu 100mg/3.5oz
- Tahini 64mg/teaspoon
- Kombu 80mg/10g
- Sardines 380mg/100g
- Salmon (with bones) 335mg/100g
- Goats milk 326mg/cup
- Dried figs 269mg/10 figs
- Rhubarb 105mg/cup
- Perch 91mg/84g
- Chinese cabbage 74mg/cup
- Soy milk 74.5mg/cup
- Green leafy vegetables also contain high amounts of calcium and other great nutrients