

In Search of Calcium . . . Explore “MyPlate”

Calcium intakes for most people in the United States (US) fall short of recommendations, a concern because calcium is essential for everyone. Calcium is especially important during periods of rapid growth, such as the childhood and teen years, and for older adults to help compensate for age-related bone losses.

Calcium Check

How does your calcium intake from foods compare to the recommendations? For information on a daily food plan that's based on your age, gender, height, weight and physical activity level, go to www.ChooseMyPlate.gov.



Cheesy Manicotti

The **Vegetables Group** provides vitamin A from beta-carotene, vitamin C, folate, carbohydrates and water. A half-cup serving of certain cooked dark-green leafy vegetables (beet or turnip greens, collards, kale) contains about 90 mg of calcium. Smaller amounts found in a half-cup of cooked broccoli (30 mg), bok choy (80 mg) or Swiss chard (50 mg) count, too!

The **Fruits Group** includes vitamin A from beta-carotene, folate, vitamin C, carbohydrates, fiber and water. Fruits are not naturally rich in calcium, although small amounts, such as in two dried figs (50 mg) or an orange (50 mg), can contribute to your intake. However, some fruit juices and fruit drinks are fortified with this important mineral. Look at the Nutrition Facts label to

find the Percent Daily Value for calcium in a serving.

The **Dairy Group** is important for calcium. In addition to supplying riboflavin and protein, it's the primary food source of calcium in the US. Milk, yogurt and cheese are naturally rich in calcium; vitamin D added to milk and to certain other dairy foods helps your body absorb calcium. Many dairy foods are available in fat free, lower fat and calcium-fortified options, too. Eating three servings of lower fat dairy foods daily puts you well on your way to reaching your calcium goals. If you avoid dairy foods, consider calcium-fortified soy or rice milk.

Don't miss the **Protein Foods Group**. It offers protein, niacin, iron and zinc. While not known for contributing calcium, some choices, including three ounces of canned salmon with soft bones (180 mg), one-half cup of cooked dried peas or beans (~50 mg), three ounces of tofu set with calcium sulfate (100 mg) or one ounce of almonds (70 mg), provide varying amounts of calcium.

Zeroing in on Calcium

Throughout the tour, we've directed you to Nutrition Facts labels. To determine the calcium in a serving, find the Percent (%) Daily Value for calcium (it's based on 1000 mg); drop the percent sign and add a zero. For example, a serving of cheese with 20% of the Daily Value for calcium has about 200 mg of calcium. A *good* source of calcium provides at least 10% of the Daily Value (≥ 100 mg); an *excellent* source supplies at least 20% (≥ 200 mg).

Calcium Recommendations

| Life Stage | Recommended Dietary Allowance (mg/day) |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1 to 3 years of age | 700 |
| 4 to 8 years of age | 1000 |
| 9 to 18 years of age | 1300 |
| 19 to 50 years of age | 1000 |
| 51 to 70 years of age (males) | 1000 |
| 51 to 70 years of age (females) | 1200 |
| >70 years of age | 1200 |
| 14-18 (pregnant/lactating) | 1300 |
| 19-50 (pregnant/lactating) | 1000 |

Source: National Academy of Sciences, 2010

Touring “MyPlate”

Each food group supplies key nutrients, but no one group provides them all. Explore the food groups to find options that fit your healthful eating plan *and* help you reach your calcium goals.

The **Grains Group** provides fiber (especially from whole grains), carbohydrates, certain B-vitamins and iron. Some grain-based foods have calcium, due to calcium-containing ingredients. Examples are: a toasted English muffin (100 mg), 4-inch waffle (80 mg) or 10-inch flour tortilla (90 mg). Other grain foods, including some breakfast cereals, breads, and graham snacks, may be fortified with calcium. Check the Nutrition Facts labels.

Tasty Ways to Add Calcium

- **Without “a latte” work:** Drink milk or stir espresso into hot milk. One cup of milk contributes about 300 mg of calcium.
- **Sandwich in some calcium:** Serve up a great-tasting grilled cheese and tomato sandwich at lunchtime.
- **Top it up:** Top dinnertime favorites such as casseroles, tacos, chili, pasta or baked potatoes with shredded natural cheese.
- **Sweet treats:** One cup of low fat chocolate milk has 280 mg of calcium; a half-cup of JELL-O Instant Pudding, prepared with milk, 150 mg.

- **Snack Smart:** Natural cheese cubes, individually wrapped cheese slices or cheese sticks; fruit-flavored yogurt, a mug of hot cocoa made with milk all provide calcium.
- **Lactose sensitive?** Try smaller servings of dairy foods with a meal; yogurt with live and active cultures that break down lactose; or aged natural cheeses, such as Colby or Cheddar, that have very little lactose.
- **To improve absorption:** Spread calcium intake throughout the day and keep it to less than 500 mg per meal or snack.

Try these delicious Healthy Living ideas for adding calcium to your healthy eating plan.

Dilled-Salmon Salad Sandwiches

Prep: 10 min. **Makes:** 6 servings, two filled pita halves each

- 1 can (14-3/4 oz.) red salmon, drained, flaked
- 1 small cucumber, peeled, seeded and chopped
- 2 green onions, sliced
- 1/3 cup KRAFT Light Mayo Reduced Fat Mayonnaise
- 1/2 tsp. dill weed
- 6 large whole wheat pita bread, split
- 1 cup baby spinach leaves

MIX salmon, cucumbers, onions, mayo and dill weed until well blended.

FILL pita halves with spinach leaves and salmon mixture.

Substitute: Substitute 1/2 cup chopped red onions for the green onions.

Nutrition Bonus: Incorporate fish into your diet with this dilly salmon sandwich. Not only is the whole wheat pita a good source of dietary fiber, but the salmon also provides calcium.

Nutrition Information Per Serving: 290 calories, 9g total fat, 1.5g saturated fat, 45mg cholesterol, 620mg sodium, 34g carbohydrate, 5g dietary fiber, less than 1g sugars, 19g protein, 10%DV vitamin A, 4%DV vitamin C, 15%DV calcium, 15%DV iron.

Exchange: 2 Starch, 2 Meat (L), 1 Fat

Cheesy Manicotti

Prep: 20 min. **Total:** 1 hr. 5 min. **Makes:** 7 servings

- 1 pkg. (8 oz.) manicotti shells (14 shells)
- 1 pkg. (8 oz.) sliced fresh mushrooms
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 egg whites
- 1 pkg. (10 oz.) frozen chopped spinach, thawed, well drained
- 1 container (15 oz.) POLLY-O Natural Part Skim Ricotta Cheese
- 1 cup KRAFT 2% Milk Shredded Mozzarella Cheese, divided
- 1/3 cup KRAFT Grated Parmesan Cheese, divided
- 2 cups spaghetti sauce

HEAT oven to 350°F.

COOK pasta as directed on package, omitting salt. Meanwhile, heat large nonstick skillet on medium heat. Add mushrooms and garlic; cook 5 min., stirring frequently. Remove from heat. Beat egg whites in medium bowl. Add mushroom mixture, spinach, ricotta and half each of the mozzarella and Parmesan; mix well.

DRAIN pasta; fill with spinach mixture. Place in 13x9-inch baking dish sprayed with cooking spray; cover with sauce.

BAKE 40 min. or until heated through. Top with remaining mozzarella and Parmesan; bake 5 min. or until mozzarella is melted.

Nutrition Bonus: The combination of ricotta and 2% mozzarella cheeses provides calcium in this delicious, low calorie meal. And as a bonus, the spinach is high in vitamin A.

Nutrition Information Per Serving: 340 calories, 12g total fat, 6g saturated fat, 30mg cholesterol, 620mg sodium, 36g carbohydrate, 4g dietary fiber, 7g sugars, 23g protein, 110%DV vitamin A, 10%DV vitamin C, 60%DV calcium, 15%DV iron.

Exchange: 2-1/2 Starch, 2 Meat (L), 1 Fat

Dietary Exchanges based on *Choose Your Foods: Exchange Lists for Diabetes* © 2008 by the American Diabetes Association and the American Dietetic Association.