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Nutrition Fact Sheet on Calcium

Which foods are good sources of calcium?

Good sources of calcium include milk, cheese, yogurt, broccoli, canned sardines or salmon with bones, and calcium-fortified products, such as orange juice, breads, cereals, and cottage cheese.

How much of these foods do I need?

Most Americans need about 1000 milligrams (mg) of calcium each day, typically two to three servings of calcium-rich foods. Children, teenagers, young adults (up to age 24), and pregnant and breast-feeding women need 1,200 mg of calcium each day, or four servings of calcium-rich foods. Some health experts recommend higher levels of calcium to prevent bone loss. Postmenopausal women need 1200-1500 mg daily. The following provides some serving size examples of calcium-rich foods:

One calcium-rich serving, about 300 mg

- 1 cup skim or low-fat milk, or low-fat or nonfat yogurt
- 1-1/2 ounces cheese
- 1 cup calcium-fortified juice
- 3 ounces canned sardines with bones
- 1/4 cup powdered dry skim milk
- 1/2 cup evaporated milk

One half calcium-rich serving, 100-200 mg

- 1 ounce calcium-fortified cereal
- 1 cup kale or broccoli, cooked
- 1/2 cup collards, turnip greens, or mustard greens
- 3 ounces canned salmon with bones
- 4 ounces tofu (made with calcium)

One quarter calcium-rich serving

- 1/2 cup ice cream, frozen yogurt
- 1/2 cup cottage cheese
- 1 cup dry beans, cooked
- 2 oz. Shrimp
- 1/2 cup artichokes
- 1 cornmeal muffin
- 1 medium orange

One and one-half ounces of cheese is about the size of a thumb, one-half cup of cottage cheese, ice cream, and frozen yogurt is about the size of a tennis ball, and 4 ounces of tofu is about the size of a deck of cards. If you don't eat enough servings of calcium-rich foods one day, you can make up by eating more the next day.

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