

Why is calcium important?

Top health benefits of calcium

BONE HEALTH

More than 10 million US adults are affected by osteoporosis, which is a leading cause of broken bones in the elderly. Calcium is a vital building block for the production of bone.

NERVES AND MUSCLES

Healthy nerve conduction and muscle contraction require normal levels of calcium.

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

Consuming calcium may prevent fat absorption, therefore improving weight control.

BLOOD PRESSURE AND HEART HEALTH

The effects of calcium supplementation on our heart and vessels is controversial. Everyone agrees that calcium is important to maintain a proper heartbeat and blood pressure. Whether or not calcium supplementation increases the risk of heart attacks and strokes is another question. Some studies suggest that calcium supplementation increases the risk of heart attacks and strokes, while others suggest the opposite. When calcium is consumed in whole foods, no increase is seen.

Calcium-rich food options

Calcium per 100g

SEEDS/NUTS/GRAINS

Sesame seeds (<i>whole, dried</i>)	975mg
Almonds (<i>whole</i>)	269mg
Chia seeds (<i>dried</i>)	631mg
Quinoa (<i>cooked</i>)	17mg

BEANS & LENTILS

Navy beans	
(<i>small, white, cooked, no salt</i>)	62mg
Pinto beans (<i>cooked</i>),	46mg
Baked beans,	60mg
Soybeans (<i>green, raw</i>)	197mg
Edamame (<i>shelled</i>),	53mg
Tofu,	47mg
Soymilk (<i>calcium-fortified</i>),	123mg

FISH

Sardines (<i>in water</i>),	176mg
Salmon (<i>pink, raw</i>),	67mg
Trout (<i>rainbow, raw</i>),	67mg

FRUITS/VEGETABLES

Kale (<i>raw</i>)	150
Lettuce (<i>green leaf, raw</i>)	36mg
Artichokes	44mg
Celery (<i>cooked</i>)	40mg
Brussels sprouts	42mg
Cabbage (<i>raw</i>)	40mg
Collard greens	78mg
Sweet potato (<i>baked in skin, no salt</i>)	38mg
Carrots (<i>raw</i>)	33mg
Butternut squash (<i>baked, no salt</i>)	48mg
Broccoli, raw	47mg
Figs	35mg
Raspberries	25mg
Strawberries	16mg
Tangerines	37mg
Oranges	40mg
Orange juice (<i>fresh/concentrate</i>)	11mg

CHEESE/DAIRY

Parmesan cheese (<i>grated</i>)	853mg
Cheddar cheese	710mg
Milk (<i>2%</i>),	120mg
Milk (<i>non-fat</i>)	125mg
Yogurt (<i>Greek, plain, nonfat</i>)	110mg
Yogurt (<i>fruit-flavored</i>)	152mg

Research suggests beans may help lower LDL cholesterol levels and reduce risk of Type 2 Diabetes.

Bottom line

We need to consume 1000 - 1200 mg of calcium a day. The majority of that should be from whole foods and not supplements.