

Are Calcium Supplements Really Dangerous?

With news of a possible connection to heart attacks, it's easy to be worried about taking a calcium supplement.



But the good news is that the risk of heart attack is very small.

And calcium does reduce the risk of bone loss. So, what

to do? Current recommendations suggest getting exactly the amount of calcium YOU need, and no more. If you're staying within the recommended amounts, you shouldn't have anything to worry about.

One of the best things for your bones is exercise. Just 20 minutes of physical activity 3 times per week will improve bone health. So get moving!



The Bottom Line

Chances are, you're getting enough calcium from your diet. But if you've kept a food diary and realize you're coming up short, talk to your doctor about taking a supplement in the smallest amount needed to make up for any calcium you're missing. Getting the recommended amount of calcium and living an active lifestyle will keep your bones strong and healthy!



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Calcium Supplements

Helpful or Harmful?



The Great Calcium Debate

Calcium is a mineral which improves the density of bones, keeping them strong as we age. Since our bodies aren't capable of producing calcium, it's important that we get calcium from our diets. For years, it was believed that we weren't getting enough calcium from food alone, so taking a calcium supplement became common. However, in the 2011 British Medical Journal, a study found that calcium supplements were associated with increased risk of cardiovascular events like heart attacks. Plus, countries with the highest calcium consumption are having greater numbers of fractures than those with less calcium intake! With all of this conflicting information, it's easy to see why the calcium confusion continues.



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How Much Do We Really Need?

According to the National Osteoporosis Foundation, the amount of calcium and vitamin D we need varies by age and sex:

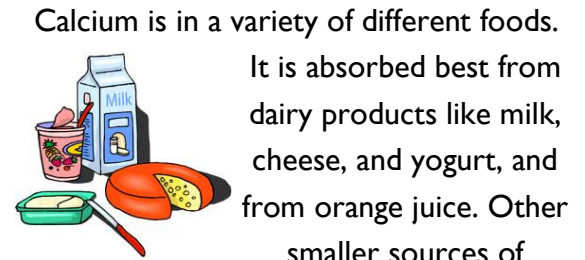
Sex / Age	Calcium	Vitamin D
Women under 50	1000 mg daily	400-800 IUs daily
Women 50+	1200 mg daily	800-1000 IUs daily
Men under 50	1000 mg daily	400-800 IUs daily
Men 50-70	1000 mg daily	800-1000 IUs daily
Men 71+	1200 mg daily	800-1000 IUs daily

On food labels, calcium is listed as a percentage. This is based on 1,000 mg of calcium per day. So, if a food is 20% calcium per serving, it contains 200 mg of calcium.

Vitamin D goes hand-in-hand with calcium because calcium can't be absorbed without it. Sources of Vitamin D include fish, cheese, egg yolks, fortified foods, and the sun!



Calcium-Rich Foods



Calcium is in a variety of different foods. It is absorbed best from dairy products like milk, cheese, and yogurt, and from orange juice. Other smaller sources of calcium include green vegetables such as broccoli, kale, and collard greens; and fortified foods including breads, cereals, snacks, and soymilk.

To figure out how much calcium you're getting, try keeping a food diary for a few days. Write down everything you eat, then calculate the calcium!

Calcium Supplements

Many people get enough calcium in their diets. It is important to determine your individual daily calcium consumption. You may not need a supplement, and with all the recent bad news about high calcium intake, you certainly don't want to take a supplement if you don't need it! If your diet is **not** enough, choose the supplement with the amount of calcium you need to reach your daily calcium requirement.

