

- Drink plenty of fluids if you take calcium supplements. This helps reduce bloating and constipation.
- Do not overdo it. You do not need to take more than the recommended amount of calcium. It may even cause kidney stones.



Building and Keeping Strong Bones

Exercise, calcium, and vitamin D

How much vitamin D do I need?

People get most of their vitamin D from sunlight. But people who live in the Northwest do not get enough sunlight most of the year. Also, dark skin, aging, and sunscreen limit the amount of vitamin D our skin produces.

Fortified milk products are the main source of vitamin D in most people’s diet, but often only provide 100 IU of vitamin D per serving. Most people also need a vitamin D supplement to meet their daily requirement.

This table shows the U.S. RDA of vitamin D needed to prevent deficiency. People who live in the Northwest or other places where sunlight is low may need to take at least this amount in their supplement.

Age Group	Vitamin D Needed per Day in International Units (IU)
Birth to 11 months.....	400 IU
Age 1 to 70 years	600 IU
Age 70 years and over.....	800 IU
Homebound adults.....	800 IU

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns.

Women’s Health Care Center:
206-598-5500

What kind of exercise will help build my bones?

We lose bone mass when we do not exercise. To help build your bones:

- Exercise for at least 30 to 40 minutes, 3 to 4 times a week. *Weight-bearing* exercises, like walking and jogging, and *resistive* exercise, like weight training, help build bone mass.
- Do different types of exercises. Exercise is *site-specific*. This means that bone mass will increase only in the area you exercise.



Regular exercise is important for building and keeping strong bones.

- Lift heavier weights and do fewer repetitions for best results when doing resistance training. To avoid injury, learn how to lift weights or use weight machines correctly before you use them.
- Check with your doctor before you start any exercise program.

How much calcium is right for me?

We all need calcium – women, men, kids, and teens – but our needs change as we age. The table below shows what you need. These are the 2010 guidelines from the Institute of Medicine.

Group	Calcium Needed per Day in Milligrams (mg)
Children 1 to 3 years	700 mg
Children 4 to 8 years	1,000 mg
Children and teens 9 to 18 years	1,300 mg
Adults 19 to 50 years	1,000 mg
Women and men older than 50 years	1,200 mg

How can I reach my daily calcium goal?

- **Choose foods wisely.** Eat high-calcium foods or calcium-fortified foods, take calcium supplements, or do all three.
- **Read labels.** The amount of calcium in a food is referred to as a percent of the U.S. Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA). It is based on a requirement of 1,000 milligrams a day.

Add a zero to the percent on a label to figure out the milligrams (mg) in a food (for example, 30% is 300 mg of calcium). Adjust this percent if you need more or less than 1,000 mg of calcium a day.

Calcium in Foods

	Calcium in Milligrams (mg)
Yogurt, low-fat (1 cup)	415 mg
Milk (1 cup)	300 mg
Cheese, mozzarella (1 oz.)	207 mg
Frozen yogurt (½ cup)	150 mg
Tofu with calcium (½ cup)	120 to 350 mg
Kale (½ cup)	103 mg
Navy beans (½ cup)	62 mg
Broccoli (½ cup)	47 mg
Oysters (½ cup)	100 mg
Canned pink salmon (3 oz.)	150 mg
Canned sardines (8 medium)	350 mg

Should I take calcium supplements?

You should be able to reach your calcium goal by eating a healthy diet. If it is hard to eat enough calcium-rich foods, supplements may be a good way to add calcium to your diet. They come in many forms, but the *elemental* calcium is what is important. Elemental calcium is the amount of calcium in the supplement that your body absorbs and uses. Read the label to find out the amount of elemental calcium in each pill.

How should I take calcium supplements?

- Calcium is absorbed best when taken in small amounts throughout the day. Do not take more than 500 mg at a time.
- Do not take calcium supplements with high-fiber meals or with bulk-forming laxatives. These may keep your body from absorbing the calcium.
- If you take calcium carbonate, take it with meals. Food will help your body absorb this form of calcium.
- Calcium citrate is the best-absorbed calcium supplement, even when taken without food.