



Calcium is a mineral that is mostly present in your bones and teeth. A diet with foods that are high in calcium is necessary for the development of strong bones and healthy teeth, especially in children. For adults, it is an important way to help prevent the development of osteoporosis.

Milk has a lot of calcium in it, so drinking milk regularly can help most people easily meet their daily calcium needs. However, for those who do not like milk or have an allergy to it, getting enough calcium can be more difficult.

Where else can I get calcium?

Some alternate sources of calcium include:

- Calcium-fortified juices
- Yogurt
- Dark green, leafy vegetables
- Cheese
- Cocoa made with milk
- Chocolate milk
- Calcium-fortified soy milk
- Calcium-fortified breads and cereals
- Pudding

How much calcium do I need? How much does my child need?

In general, children age 4-8 need about 800 mg, or three, eight-ounce glasses of milk daily; those age 9-18 need about 1,300 mg, or four glasses of milk; and adults need about 1,000 mg of calcium, or three to four glasses of milk.* Talk to your doctor and your child's pediatrician to ensure you and your child are receiving the appropriate daily amount of calcium in your diet.

What should I stay away from?

Drinking soda instead of calcium-rich drinks can mean you aren't getting enough calcium. Drinking a lot of caffeine or alcohol or using tobacco can cause you to lose calcium. Of course, avoiding a high consumption of these items will also help you prevent tooth decay, gum problems and other serious health issues, too!

*American Academy of Pediatrics, 2006.

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