



# Calcium

Calcium is the most abundant mineral in the body. Because the body cannot make calcium it is called "essential" and must be supplied by the diet or supplements.

## How do I maintain or improve my intake?

- Eat foods and drinks high in calcium
- If prescribed, take my calcium supplement as directed  
Dose \_\_\_\_\_
- Other actions \_\_\_\_\_

## Why should I care?

The best known job of calcium is to help build strong (hard) bones and teeth. But, calcium also helps keep your nerves and muscles working correctly and helps your blood clot. If you do not get enough calcium from food or supplements every day, your body will take calcium from your bones. When you lose too much calcium from your bones you are at risk for breaking them. You could break ribs during chest PT or break a bone during a fall. Your CF Center Caregivers may recommend that you get a DEXA study to check your bone health.

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## How much calcium do I need?

The CF Foundation recommends that you get the amount of calcium listed below. The results of your DEXA may show that you need more calcium. Ask your CF dietitian (RD) how to meet your calcium needs.

Age	Calcium (mg)
0 to 12 months	210 - 270
1 to 3 years	500
4 to 8 years	800
9 years and older	1300 - 1500

## What are the best sources of calcium?

Dairy foods and drinks are the best calcium sources. Many are fortified with vitamin D, another important nutrient for bone health. Other good calcium sources are foods made with dairy products, like macaroni and cheese, cheeseburgers, puddings, and creamed soups. Dark green vegetables and calcium fortified orange juice (OJ) have some calcium and some breakfast cereals are fortified with calcium. If you cannot get enough calcium from foods, ask your CF Center RD about calcium supplements. Your body can absorb only about 500 mg of calcium at a time; so spread your calcium sources throughout the day.

Food	Mg Calcium
Total® cereal (1 cup)	750
Yogurt (8 oz. cup)	419
Milk (1 cup)	291
Cheese (1 ounce)	200
Ice Cream (1 cup)	176
Spinach (½ cup)	138
Cheerios® (1 cup)	107



## Can I get too much calcium?

Most people find it difficult to get enough calcium, but it is possible to get too much. The upper limit of calcium intake is 2,500 mg daily. Too much calcium (usually as supplements) can interfere with the absorption of some other minerals. Calcium can also interfere with the absorption of some antibiotics, so it is best to ask your CF Center RD how much calcium you should get each day.



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