

Nutrition & Dietetics Department and Paediatric
Department

CALCIUM

Are you and your family getting enough?

This leaflet tells you:

- the recommended calcium intakes for different groups of people
- how to achieve the recommended intake

Living our values *every day*



Why is calcium important?

Calcium is vital for growing bones and teeth. Children replace their skeleton rapidly (every 2 years), and an adult skeleton is replaced every 7 years. In puberty and adolescence, there is a growth spurt and bones are growing at their fastest rate, laying down calcium and increasing in density.

This leaflet tells you about recommended calcium intakes for different groups of people and how to achieve the recommended calcium intakes.

Calcium requirements

The recommended daily intakes of calcium are:

Group	Age	Calcium	Stars
Infants	Less than 1 year	525mg	9
Children	1 to 3 years	350mg	6
	4 to 6 years	450mg	7½
	7 to 10 years	550mg	9
Adolescents	11 to 18 years	800mg girls	13
		1000mg boys	17
Adults	19 years and over	700mg	12
Breastfeeding Mums		1250mg	21

Calcium-rich dairy products (1 star = 60mg of calcium)

Food	Amount	Calcium
Cow's Milk (incl. lactose-free)	½ pint (200ml)	4 ★★★★★
Infant formula (first milk)	100ml	1 ★
Milk on cereal	100ml	2 ★★
Cheese, hard	1 slice (30g)	3 ★★★★★
Cheese triangle	15g	2 ★★
Babybel	20g (1 cheese)	2 ★★
Cheese strings	20g (1 string)	2 ★★
Lassi	130ml	2 ★★
Cottage cheese	100g	2 ★★
Fromage Frais (e.g. <i>Petits Filous, Wildlife, Little Yeo, Peppa Pig</i>)	1 pot (50g)	1 ★★
Yoghurt, fruit or plain	100g	2 ★★
Actimel yogurt drink	100ml bottle	2 ★★
Ice cream, dairy	1 scoop (75g)	1 ★
Custard	1 serving (120ml)	2 ★★
Kefir (fermented milk) (e.g. <i>Biotiful</i>)	100ml	2 ★★

Low-fat dairy products contain as much calcium as full-fat versions.

Calcium-rich, non-dairy products

Food	Amount	Calcium
Fortified soya, oat, coconut, nut, pea, rice milks (e.g. <i>Alpro Soya 1+</i> , <i>Oatly whole/barista</i> , <i>Koko Super</i> , <i>Sproud etc.</i>) Note: rice milk should not be given to children under 5 years.	⅓ pint (200ml)	4 ★★★★★
Calcium-set Tofu (E509 or E516) - Cauldron Organic Tofu - Taifun Tofu	60g	4 ★★★★★ 2 ★★
Soya yoghurt / dessert / custard (calcium-fortified)	125g (1 pot)	2 ★★
Coconut yogurt / dessert (calcium-fortified (e.g. <i>Koko</i> , <i>Xotic</i> , some (not all) <i>Coconut Collaborative</i> yogurt pouches)	125g pot or 90g pouch	2 ★★
Fortified dairy-free cheese: - Koko Cheddar - Koko Soft Cream Cheese - Daiya Mozzarella Shreds	15g 30g 30g	2 ★★ 1 ★ 1 ★
Sardines (canned in oil with bones)	60g (½ tin)	4 ★★★★★
Pilchards (with bones)	60g	2 ★★
Prawns	3 tbsp (80g)	2 ★★
Tinned salmon (with bones)	50g (½ tin)	1 ★
Fish fingers	2 (60g each)	1 ★

Food	Amount	Calcium
Scampi in Breadcrumbs	6 pieces (90g)	3 ★★★★★
Egg	1 medium size	1 ★
Calcium fortified oat cereal (e.g. <i>Ready Brek dry cereal</i>)	1 tbsp (15g)	3 ★★★★★
Calcium fortified cereal (e.g. <i>Rice Krispies / Cheerio's / Multigrain shapes etc.</i>)	30g	2 ★★
Bread, white	2 large slices	2 ★★
Bread, wholemeal	2 large slices	1 ★
Pitta bread/chapatti	1 portion (65g)	1 ★
Hovis "Best of Both", Warburton's crusty white bread and white rolls	1 large slice/roll	3 ★★★★★
Genius gluten-free bread*	1 slice (36g)	1 ★
Okra, boiled	1 serving (50g)	1 ★
Watercress	1 serving (30g)	1 ★
Spring greens	1 serving (75g)	1 ★
Orange	Medium size	1 ★

NOTE: Beans, nuts, seeds, spinach, and dried fruit are **not good calcium sources**. This is because they contain other compounds (oxalates and or phytates), which reduce how much calcium your body can absorb from them. You should not rely on them as your main calcium source, but you can use them with other calcium containing foods.

*Gluten-free bread is often not fortified with calcium – check the label cautiously.

How can we increase our calcium intake?

- Drink 1 glass (200ml) of cow's milk or calcium-fortified plant milk.
- Start the day with wholegrain calcium-fortified cereal and milk
- Snack on a dairy yogurt or calcium-fortified plant yogurt with fruit
- Sprinkle cheese on meals
- Used canned sardines instead of tuna in a sandwich
- Top a jacket potato with plain yoghurt and cheese / herbs
- Check non-dairy sources have added calcium or are “fortified” or “enriched” with calcium.

When should we take calcium supplements?

If you can't get enough calcium from food sources, you may need a supplement. Talk to your GP or dietitian about this.

How can we keep our bones healthy?

- **Be active:** Weight bearing exercise is best to strengthen bones. Do more walking, cycling, running, or tennis.
- **Vitamin D:** The body needs vitamin D to absorb calcium. If you do not have enough vitamin D, you will have insufficient calcium levels and the body will take calcium from stores in skeleton, leading to weakened bones. The main source of vitamin D is through the skin from sunlight. Between April and September ensure that you get some short exposure to the sunshine (approximately 20 minutes 2 to 3 times a week without wearing sunscreen).

- Dietary sources of vitamin D are insufficient to meet all our needs (small amounts in oily fish, spreads, fortified cereal or yogurts). Therefore, Vitamin D supplementation is recommended in Autumn and Winter: 10 micrograms (or 400 IU) per day after age 1 year, and 8.5 to 10 micrograms per day until age 1 year.

This dietary advice was produced using the most up to date knowledge available at the time. Every care has been taken to give correct and up to date information.



Department of Nutrition &
Dietetics
Kingston Hospital NHS Trust



KINGSTON HOSPITAL PAEDIATRICS:
FROM BIRTH - 18 YEARS

Patient Advice and Liaison Services (PALS)

PALS can provide information, advice and support to patients and relatives. 020 8934 3993
khft.pals@nhs.net

Accessible information

If you would like this information in a different format, please let us know and we will do our best to meet your request.

Pastoral & Spiritual Support Services

You can ask to speak to a Church of England or Roman Catholic Priest, the Rabbi or Imam.

Please call **020 8546 7711** and ask to speak to the Duty Chaplain.

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