

Calcium Information

Contributed by Dr. Paul G. Jensen

Who should take calcium supplements?

Everyone will benefit from a quality calcium product. There is more calcium in the body than any other mineral. Women should always be taking plenty of extra calcium due to their risk for osteoporosis. Symptoms of a lack of calcium include muscle cramps, frequent colds, itching skin, reoccurring cold sores, tooth decay, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and heart palpitations (a partial list).

How do I know if the calcium I am taking is good quality?

In order for your body to utilize a calcium supplement, the calcium ions must be of a type that is bioavailable (easily absorbed, and usable by the cells). Many products are made from limestone (calcium carbonate), which is the same thing found in your concrete sidewalk (the bioavailability is very low). Most of the other calcium sources are not much better than limestone and consequently most calcium supplements are poor quality.

How much calcium should I take?

The total daily amount should be approximately 1200 mg. Most Americans only get 500-700 mg in their diet and should therefore take extra. Contrary to popular belief, pasteurized milk is not the best calcium source because of its poor digestibility. A diet consisting of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and quality meats provides a substantial amount of calcium. Sardines with bones and dark green plants are the best calcium sources.

What else do I need to take with calcium?

Magnesium and vitamin D. Most good calciums include magnesium and you can get Vitamin D by sun exposure or taking a quality supplement. We recommend Cataplex D (one tablet per day).

What type of calcium is best?

This can be a difficult question to answer because each person is different and has different needs. Better quality ones contain calcium in a chelated or ionized form such as calcium citrate, lactate or an amino acid chelate.

Calcium Products

The only kind of calcium you can ionize in your blood stream is calcium bicarbonate (don't confuse this with calcium carbonate). The ionization of a mineral is achieved by enzyme pathways in the body. Because you cannot put calcium bicarbonate into a tablet, the body has to convert other forms of calcium into calcium bicarbonate to use it.

Calcium Lactate (Standard Process): This is not a dairy product and contains no lactose. Calcium lactate changes to calcium bicarbonate in just one step whereas it takes twelve steps for limestone. Therefore calcium lactate is the most bioavailable form of calcium.

Recommended dose: 4-12 tablets per day on an empty stomach

Cal-Ma Plus (Standard Process): The same product as above combined with parathyroid glandular. The parathyroid gland assists the body in calcium utilization. This product works better than plain Calcium Lactate in certain individuals with parathyroid problems.

Recommended dose: 3-6 per day

Calcifood Wafers and Biost (Standard Process): These two products are specifically designed to rebuild bone in cases of

osteoporosis or loose teeth.

They are cold processed products made from raw veal bone.

Recommended dose: 6-12 Calcifood and 3-6 Biost per day

Rose Calcium Chelate: This is a reasonably priced formula that we have been using for many years that is well liked by patients. It contains a blend of several forms of chelated calciums along with magnesium, vitamins C and D. The tablets are small and easy to swallow.

Recommended dose: 1-3 per day

Calcium, Magnesium with Boron and Zinc (Bronson Laboratories): This is another formula that we have used for years which seems to work well. It also contains the two trace minerals (boron and zinc) needed for healthy bones.

Calcium citrate has certain advantages including a higher elemental calcium content, better solubility, less gas formation and is a natural inhibitor of kidney stones (a potential problem with taking calcium supplements).

Recommended dose: 2-4 tablets per day