

USEFUL FACTS

Calcium & Osteoporosis

Calcium

- Calcium is an essential nutrient important throughout life for normal body function, strong bones and strong teeth.
- The richest, most well absorbed sources of calcium are dairy products, milk and calcium fortified soy milk.
- Calcium supplements may be a solution if you can't eat calcium rich foods.
- However a calcium supplement doesn't supply the other important bone minerals (zinc, magnesium etc) found in dairy products.
- Calcium is better absorbed from foods than it is from supplement tablets.
- It should also be noted that high calcium intake with meals can inhibit iron absorption - so if taking a calcium supplement it should be taken at bedtime.

Osteoporosis

- In New Zealand 1 in 2 women will be affected by osteoporosis.
- Osteoporosis does not just happen in older age - young people with low bone density can get osteoporosis as well.
- During early adulthood we develop our peak bone density (which is the maximum amount of bone in the skeleton during lifetime). Up to 80% of your peak bone density is predetermined by your genes.
- Your risk for developing osteoporosis and subsequent fractures is largely determined by your peak bone density. So if you have a family history of osteoporosis you are more likely to develop osteoporosis.
- You are also at increased risk from developing osteoporosis if you have a:
 - Poor calcium intake
 - Smoke cigarettes
 - Drink excessive caffeine
 - Drink excessive alcohol
 - High intake of salt
 - High intake of protein
 - High intake of fibre
 - High intake of phosphorous (found in carbonated drinks)
 - Irregular exercise (less than 60minutes 3 x a week)
 - Irregular menstrual periods
 - Early menopause
- Women without their menstrual periods for 3 months or longer (amenorrhoea) are also at increased risk for osteoporosis even if they exercise. Prolonged amenorrhoea may result in low bone density and 'early onset' osteoporosis.

The Facts Behind Some Common Myths About Milk!

- Milk is a GOOD source of calcium - the lactose in milk helps the body absorb calcium.
- Milk will NOT cause breathing problems - 3% of the population have allergies to milk protein. Most outgrow this allergy by the time they are 2 years old. If you are allergic it may increase the levels of mucus in your respiratory tract.
- Cow protein IS digested properly - it is unlikely that there is residual protein left from the digestion of milk. The amino acids are absorbed into the bloodstream from the stomach.
- Milk will NOT cause constipation - a change from breast milk to cows milk formula will cause babies to be constipated for a few days. Their digestive system is adjusting to a higher casein (milk protein) level.
- The hormones in cows milk will NOT affect humans - estrogen levels in cows milk is 0.2 - 1.0 ng/ml. The estrogen in humans' milk is 6 - 10 ng/ml. The average person would need to consume 48 litres in one sitting to feel toxic effects!

How much calcium do I need each day?

- Girls (12-18 years old) - 800-1000mg
- Women (19-54 years old) - 800mg
- Pregnant Women - 1100mg
- Breastfeeding Women - 1200mg
- Women after Menopause - 1100mg
- Athletic Women with Amenorrhoea - 1000-1500mg

How to get your daily calcium

- 1 glass standard Blue top milk - 288mg
- 99.9% Fat-free, extra calcium milk - 375mg
- Calcium enriched children's milk - 400mg
- Flavoured milk - 288mg
- Calcium enriched soy milk - 375mg
- 200g Whole, fruit flavoured - 260mg
- 200g Low fat, fruit flavoured - 320mg
- Dairy dessert - 262mg
- 30g Cheddar cheese - 240mg
- 30g Cottage cheese - 30mg
- 30g Almonds - 70mg
- Baked Beans (1 cup) - 90mg
- Tofu (125g) - 130mg
- Muesli (125g) - 180mg
- Mussels (80g) - 130mg
- Broccoli (1 cup) - 100mg

There is NO cure! So ...

- Consume your recommended dietary amounts of calcium every day
- Avoid smoking and excessive alcohol
- Engage in regular weight-bearing exercise
- Maintain regular menstrual periods
- Discuss your bone health with a NZ Registered Dietitian or Doctor
- Have a bone mineral density (BMD) test when appropriate