

Calcium

Why it's important

Calcium is often thought of as a nutrient that helps to keep your bones and teeth strong. It is also involved in your nervous system, blood clotting and controlling your muscles.

Recommended intakes

In the UK, the following calcium intakes are recommended¹:

Stage of life*	Recommended daily intake (mg)	
0-12 months	525	
1-3 years	350	
4-6 years	450	
7-10 years	550	
11-18 years	Males 1000	Females 800
Adults	700	
Breastfeeding	1250	

*Please note that this resource is aimed at adults. Resources for pregnancy, breastfeeding and children are available at vegansociety.com.

Sources of calcium

You can get all the calcium you need from a totally plant-based diet. Sources include calcium-set tofu, calcium-fortified milk and yoghurt alternatives, bread fortified with extra calcium, kale, pak choi, okra, spring greens, dried figs, chia seeds and almonds. The table on the next page highlights that calcium-fortified products and calcium-set tofu are particularly good sources of this nutrient. Include calcium-fortified foods or calcium-set tofu in most of your meals to help you meet your daily requirement.

Item	Calcium content ^{2,3,4} (mg)
100g uncooked firm calcium-set tofu	350
2 slices of bread fortified with extra calcium	242
200ml calcium-fortified plant milk	240
125g calcium-fortified soya yoghurt	150
80g cooked kale	120
30g dried figs	75
30g almonds	72
Tablespoon of chia seeds	69

Calcium absorption

In addition to the amount of calcium in a serving of food, there is information available about how easy it is for your body to absorb it. The table below shows you the absorbability of calcium in some plant foods:

Absorbability ^{5,6,7}	Plant food
Good	Kale, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, pak choi, cauliflower, watercress, calcium-fortified plant milk, calcium-set tofu
Fair	Pinto beans, red beans, white beans
Poor	Sesame seeds, rhubarb
Very poor	Spinach

Summary

- Calcium-set tofu and calcium-fortified foods are particularly good sources of calcium. For example, 400ml of calcium-fortified plant milk would provide about two thirds of an adult's recommended daily intake of calcium, and 100g of calcium-set tofu (uncooked) might provide about half of it.

- Other plant-based sources of calcium include kale, pak choi, okra, spring greens, dried figs, chia seeds and almonds
- Include calcium-fortified foods or calcium-set tofu in most of your meals to help you meet your daily requirement

References

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