



Calcium

Recommended Intake: 1,200 – 1,500 mg/day

Upper Level: 2,500 mg/day

Calcium is one of the most important minerals for an active athlete. It's also the most abundant mineral in your body. Calcium helps build bones and teeth and keeps them strong. Most athletes need 1,200 to 1,500 milligrams of calcium a day. That's equal to about 4 cups of milk or four servings of a high-calcium food per day.

Our bodies can build strong bone best before age 18, so it's important to maximize calcium intake in middle school and high school, the exact time some teens forego high-calcium foods like milk and yogurt. After age 18, we still need ample calcium, as our bodies are replenishing calcium stores. Calcium is especially key in helping prevent and treat stress fractures.

Best bets for calcium-rich foods: milk, yogurt, cheese, pizza, calcium-fortified soy milk and tofu, orange juice with added calcium, broccoli and dark greens, fortified cereals, breads, or cereal bars, and fortified sports bars.

You can check the "Nutrition Facts" food label to find out how different foods stack up when it comes to calcium. You'll find calcium listed as a percentage of the recommended daily amount. Just multiply that percentage by 10 to get the milligrams (mg) of calcium in one serving.

Calcium in foods		
At least 300 mg/serving	200-300 mg/serving	At least 100 mg/serving
1 cup plain yogurt	1 oz. most cheeses	_ cup pudding
1 cup skim or 2% milk	1 sl. calcium-enriched bread	1 oz. ricotta cheese
1 cup OJ with calcium (varies)	1 cup 1% or 2% chocolate milk	1 cup ice milk or ice cream
_ cup calcium-enriched tofu	1 cup macaroni and cheese	_ cup tofu
1 cup cereal with 30% calcium	1 large slice cheese pizza	3 oz. canned salmon/bones
Sport bars with 30% calcium	Fortified cereal/granola bars	_ cup cooked collards
Soy milk with calcium (varies)	Instant breakfast drinks	1 T. blackstrap molasses