

Q. How can I get enough calcium in my diet without dairy products?

A. Milk, eggs, cheese, and yogurt may be good sources of calcium. But these and other dairy products are not for everyone. Some people have allergies to dairy products, and others choose to not eat dairy. If you don't eat dairy products, getting enough calcium in your diet is an important concern.

The average adult should get about 800 to 1,000 mg of calcium a day from food. Calcium strengthens your bones and teeth, supports muscle function, and aids in healing a cut or wound. Milk and other dairy products are the primary sources of calcium for most Americans. But you can easily get enough calcium from other foods, and it may be healthier.

For example, one glass of whole milk contains about 300 mg of calcium. But it also contains as much saturated fat and cholesterol as a spoonful of butter. If you drink enriched soymilk, you cut out the saturated fat and cholesterol. But you still get about 300 mg of calcium and most other key nutrients milk provides.

Research shows that eating a high level of dairy food increases the risk for prostate cancer in men and ovarian cancer in women. The Harvard Healthy Eating Plate recommends limiting dairy products to just one to two servings a day for best health. Even the U.S. Department of Agriculture considers calcium-fortified soymilk a good alternative to dairy products. You need calcium in your diet, but it doesn't have to come from dairy.



Here are some easy ways to get the calcium you need from non-dairy sources:

- ✓ Drink calcium-fortified orange juice.
- ✓ Add tofu to pasta and stir-fried vegetables.
- ✓ Eat more dark-green vegetables like kale and broccoli.
- ✓ Choose calcium-fortified cereals.
- ✓ Enjoy baked or grilled salmon.
- ✓ Sprinkle sliced almonds or sunflower seeds on salads.

Non-Dairy Calcium Sources

1 cup enriched soymilk	300 mg
1 cup calcium-fortified orange juice	300 mg
1/2 cup tofu	258 mg
3 oz salmon	180 mg
1 cup broccoli	178 mg
1/4 cup almonds	95 mg
1 cup kale	94 mg

Vitamin D and calcium go hand in hand

In order for your body to absorb calcium from food, you need an adequate amount of vitamin D every day. Vitamin D is commonly added to dairy products, soymilk, and orange juice, but not in a very high quantity. Very few whole foods contain a high level of vitamin D. Just eat a healthy diet. Look for non-dairy, calcium-rich foods. And consider taking a vitamin D supplement. If you don't eat enough calcium, take a calcium supplement with vitamin D.

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