

Calcium

Top nutrients for women

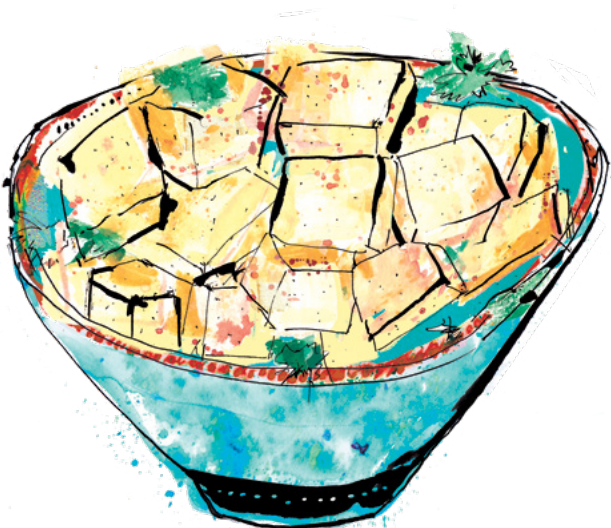


Why is calcium important for women?

Calcium is essential for protecting bone health. From around age 30, your bones start to lose strength. For women, this process speeds up after menopause when hormones, mainly oestrogen, drop.

Consuming enough calcium and being active throughout your life can help to reduce bone loss and strengthen your bones, and may lower the risk of osteoporosis (weak and fragile bones).

But like many nutrients, calcium doesn't work alone. Your body needs vitamin D to help you absorb calcium. Most of your vitamin D is made when your skin is exposed to sunlight. You can also get it in small amounts from some foods.



Where can I find calcium?

Good sources of calcium include:

- dairy products (e.g. milk, cheese, yoghurt)
- dairy alternatives that are calcium-enriched (e.g. some soy or almond milks)
- firm tofu
- tinned fish with edible bones (e.g. sardines, salmon).

You can also find smaller amounts of calcium in:

- broccoli
- white beans and chickpeas
- almonds
- sesame seeds (e.g. tahini)
- silverbeet and kale.



How can I get enough calcium?

To get enough calcium, try to consume 2.5 serves of dairy or alternatives every day until menopause. After menopause (including premature and early menopause), increase this to four serves.

A serve of dairy equals:

- 1 cup of milk
- 2 slices or 40 g of hard cheese
- 200 g of yoghurt.

Other foods that are equivalent to a serve of dairy include:

- 100 g of tofu
- 100 g of tinned salmon with bones
- 1 cup of dairy milk alternative (e.g. soy or oat milk) with 100 mg or more of added calcium per 100 ml.

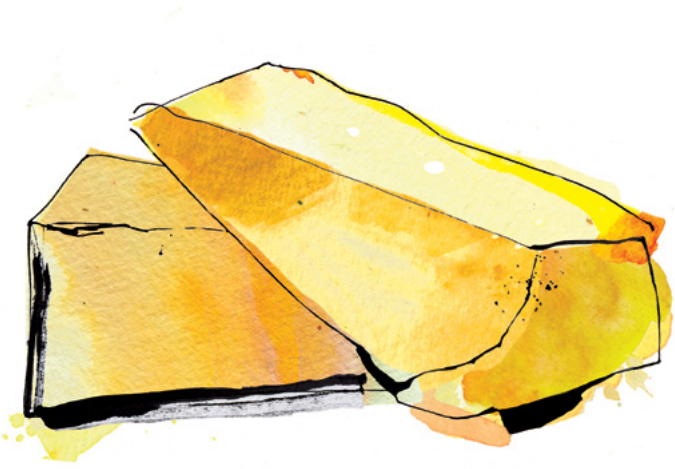
If you avoid dairy products, it can be harder to meet your calcium needs. Check the labels on any dairy alternatives you consume to ensure they're enriched with calcium. Also, speak to your doctor if you're concerned about your intake.

Lastly, avoid smoking and excess salt, alcohol and caffeine, as each can lower your calcium levels. Ensure you have healthy vitamin D levels to help with calcium absorption.



Recipe and meal idea

For a calcium-rich meal, try falafels with hummus and homemade tzatziki or this sardines on toast recipe, available at www.jh.today/sardines



Still confused about healthy eating?

To help simplify the complicated, we've created seven more fact sheets on these important nutrients for women:

- Folate
- Iodine
- Iron
- Magnesium
- Protein
- Vitamin B
- Vitamin D

Get the fact sheets at jeanhailes.org.au/resources/fact-sheets

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Disclaimer: This information does not replace medical advice. If you are worried about your health, talk to your doctor or healthcare team.

We write health information for people with diverse backgrounds, experiences and identities. We use the term 'women', but we acknowledge that this term is not inclusive of all people who may use our content.

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