

HEALTH & WELLNESS TIPS

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BARBARA C. OBERMAN



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INSURANCE SERVICES, INC.

23679 CALABASAS RD, CALABASAS, CA 91302

LET'S EAT RIGHT: Calcium

Are you getting enough calcium? According to the National Institute of Health (NIH) Office of Dietary Supplements, 55% of men and 78% of women twenty and older do not reach adequate intakes (AI) of calcium to maintain nutritional health.

Calcium is necessary to maintain strong bones and teeth, but is also used by the body's muscular, circulatory, hormonal and nervous systems. However, the body's ability to absorb calcium gradually decreases with age. So while the AI for individual 19 to 50 is 1000mg per day, it rises to 1200mg for those 50+.

Dairy products such as yogurt, cheese and milk are familiar sources of calcium. One 8 oz.

glass of reduced fat milk, for example, contains 297mg or 30% of your daily required calcium. The same amount of plain, low fat yogurt provides 415mg or 42% of your AI. These dairy foods generally contain Vitamin D as well, whose presence improves calcium absorption.

There are also many calcium-fortified cereals, some with as much as 600mg per cup such as Kellogg's *Special K Plus*®. Juices like Langers' *Harvest Apple Plus*®, with 15% of your calcium AI in 8 oz., can be a quick and simple way to provide the mineral as well. Some vegetables such as spinach and collard greens are sources for calcium, but these plants also contain oxalic acid which may bind to the calcium mineral, inhibiting optimal absorption of it.

For those who prefer multi-vitamins or non-food supplements, calcium carbonate and calcium citrate are the two main types commonly used. The former may be more convenient because carbonate molecules are smaller enabling you to take fewer pills than the citrate form. The latter may be beneficial to those with decreased stomach acid for digestion. Doses of 500mg or less at any one time are preferred as the body's ability to metabolize calcium is diminished with larger doses. The excess may just be excreted providing no benefit to the consumer.

For further information see the NIH's Dietary Supplemental Fact Sheet on calcium at <http://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/calcium.asp>

Nutritional Fiction

- ◆ *Drinking icy water will burn more calories than consuming water at room temperature.* There's no difference in the energy expended to drink icy or tepid water.
- ◆ *Butter contains more fat than margarine.* They contain the same amount of fat. However, butter contains saturated fat while margarine contains polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fat.
- ◆ *Being a vegetarian will lead to weight loss.* To lose weight you need to decrease the calories that you consume and increase your caloric expenditure through exercise. Refraining from eating meat and/or dairy may inadvertently cause you to ingest fewer calories, but compensating with carbohydrates or high-calorie juices can also cause weight gain or not provide for weight loss.

Food Standards Agency of the UK at www.eatwell.gov.uk/healthydiet/foodmyths/



One tablespoon of whipping cream adds 50 calories to a cup of coffee