

Calcium and School Meals

The main sources of calcium in the typical American diet are found in dairy products. Milk, yogurt, and cheese are some of the best sources for this nutrient. Calcium may also be found in plant sources, including dark leafy greens (such as kale and mustard, collard and turnip greens), broccoli, dried beans and bok choy. Some products (such as breakfast cereals or fruit juices) are fortified with calcium. Read Nutrition Fact labels to compare these products.

Common Calcium Rich Foods*

Food Source	Serving Size	Milligrams of Calcium
Yogurt, Plain, Low Fat	1 cup	415 mg
Milk, fat-free	1 cup	299 mg
Tofu, firm, prepared with calcium	½ cup	253 mg
Mozzarella Cheese, Low Fat	1 oz	207 mg
Cheddar Cheese	1 oz	204 mg
Soy Milk, Low Fat, with added Calcium	1 cup	199 mg
Cottage Cheese 2% Fat	½ cup	103 mg
Ice Cream, Vanilla	½ cup	84 mg
Baked Beans, Plain Vegetarian, Canned	½ cup	64 mg
Pink Salmon, Canned with Bone/Liquid	1 oz	60 mg
Kale, Raw, Chopped	½ cup	45 mg
Broccoli, Frozen, Chopped, Cooked	½ cup	30 mg



*Source: USDA Database Release: CN14 through Nutrikids Version 12.50

Increasing Calcium Intake in Schools

Low calcium intake in schools is usually caused by students declining milk. The following are ways to increase milk consumption:

- ❖ Consider offering milk in individual serving plastic bottles.
- ❖ Increase types of milks offered and make sure they are served cold.
- ❖ Provide nutrition education units focused on calcium.
- ❖ Develop school policies limiting access to soda and non-dairy beverages.

Lactose Intolerance

Some students are lactose intolerant and have trouble digesting lactose, the sugar that is naturally found in milk. These students may be able to tolerate a small amount of milk and often are able to eat yogurt and cheese without any negative effects. If students unable to tolerate any amount of milk they will need a lactose-free milk.

Nutrient Targets For Lunch Grade Groupings (1/3 RDA's)

K-3 = 267 mg
K-6 = 286 mg
4-12 = 370 mg
7-12 = 400 mg

Calcium

Calcium is the main mineral found in bones and teeth. The body builds bones until the early thirties.

If bones are not formed with enough calcium in earlier years there is a risk for osteoporosis (brittle bones) in later years.

Adequate calcium intake is needed throughout life as calcium is deposited and withdrawn from the bones daily. To keep bones strong ample calcium needs to be deposited to replace the daily withdrawals.

Calcium is also needed for proper muscle (including the heart) and nerve function, and blood clotting. These are such important functions that the body will take calcium from our bones before it will let the calcium for these other functions run short.

Recent research shows that calcium may also aid in the prevention and treatment of high blood pressure.

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