

Choosing a Calcium Supplement

- ✚ The **Dietary Reference Intake** (DRI) for calcium for adults is 1000 mg-1300 mg depending on age and gender. Ask your physician or dietitian how much **you** need but **do not take more than 2500 mg per day**.
- ✚ Calcium is absorbed better when taken several times a day in **smaller doses**, in amounts of 500mg or less per dose.
- ✚ **Calcium Citrate** or **Calcium Citrate Malate** are best absorbed on an empty stomach. **Calcium Carbonate** is best taken with or after meals.
- ✚ High amounts of calcium may cause constipation and gas. These side effects diminish after time. The citrate form of calcium may be better tolerated.
- ✚ **Vitamin D** is a fat soluble vitamin that promotes calcium absorption so choose a supplement containing vitamin D. (Do not take more than 2,000 IU per day.)
- ✚ A supplement containing **magnesium** (in amounts over 200 mg) may be associated with diarrhea.
- ✚ Calcium supplements **can interfere with some medications** such as thyroid medication and some antibiotics (among others). Be sure to ask your doctor or pharmacist about this if you take any other medications.
- ✚ Look for a **USP stamp** of approval on the label. This indicates the supplement is safe and will dissolve as it should.



Be Careful:

- ✚ Dolomite, Bone Meal, or Oyster Shell are naturally occurring forms of calcium and may contain heavy metal or lead. These pills are not tested for lead content so it is best to avoid them.
- ✚ **Do not take a calcium supplement at the same time as an iron supplement** because calcium will prevent adequate absorption of iron.