Are You Getting Enough Calcium?

Your body needs calcium for building bones and keeping them healthy. But calcium does other things, too. You need it to move your muscles and to help nerves carry messages between your brain and parts of your body. Calcium also helps blood vessels move blood throughout your body and helps release hormones and proteins.

Calcium is one of the most important minerals in your body. Almost all is stored in your bones and teeth. But you lose calcium every day through your skin, sweat, hair, and other bodily functions. Your body can’t make calcium, so you need to get it from food or supplements. Over the long term, inadequate calcium intake causes osteopenia which if untreated can lead to osteoporosis.

If your mother told you to drink your milk to become strong, she was right. Dairy is high in calcium. But greens like Chinese cabbage, kale, collards, and broccoli have calcium, too. Fatty fish like wild tuna and salmon are also good sources of Vitamin D, but many people need to take supplements. Foods fortified with calcium include many fruit juices and drinks, tofu, and cereals.

You should take some calcium supplements with food, but not all. The two most common kinds are calcium carbonate and calcium citrate. Calcium carbonate is more commonly available and is inexpensive. Due to its dependence on stomach acid for absorption, calcium carbonate is absorbed most efficiently when taken with food, whereas the more expensive calcium citrate is absorbed equally well when taken with or without food. You won’t do yourself any favors by taking calcium supplements in large doses. Calcium absorbs best when you limit yourself to 500 milligrams at a time.

While growing inside the womb, a baby needs lots of calcium to grow its bones. It’s especially important during the last three months. If you don’t get enough calcium, the baby will get what it needs from your bones. When pregnant or breastfeeding, you need to eat calcium-rich foods. The good news: Any lost bone usually comes back after giving birth or after breastfeeding.

Vitamin D and calcium are partners. Your body can’t absorb calcium without Vitamin D, which you can get from the sun and some foods. Talk to your doctor if you’re wondering if you get enough Vitamin D.

Cutting down on calcium won’t prevent kidney stones. Most kidney stones are made of a type of calcium called calcium oxalate. The calcium in foods doesn’t cause them, but too much calcium from supplements may make kidney stones more likely. Bottom line: Get the recommended amount of calcium – not too much, and not too little.
Patient Testimonial

I’m not sure where I’d be today without ConnectCare3!

Back in 2011, I was carrying a concrete block up the stairs from my basement when I slipped and severely injured my back. I started experiencing memory loss. It eventually progressed to the point that I could no longer remember the alphabet or how to tie my shoes. My wife, who worked full-time, was desperate for help and that is when she remembered her employer offered ConnectCare3 as an enhancement to our health insurance. The doctors determined that I had suffered a concussion from my fall despite the fact that I hadn’t hit my head. I worked with an amazing cognitive speech therapist that helped me regain all of my memory back.

Because we had originally worked with ConnectCare3 right after my accident, when my back condition continued to worsen in 2014, we did not hesitate to call again. Our Nurse Navigator was so calm and knowledgeable of my condition. By now, I had been diagnosed with spondylosis, which developed from the normal wear and tear of the spine as I aged. Slowly this began to affect the spinal disks in my back, becoming very painful. Along with my spondylosis, I was also suffering from two herniated disks. This occurred because there was a problem with the rubbery cushions between the vertebrae, or bones that make up my spine. These disks were irritating the nearby nerves and resulted in pain. Our Nurse Navigator provided us with a variety of educational resources so we could learn more about my condition.

The first time we met my Nurse Navigator was in the waiting room of my doctor’s office. Prior to meeting, my wife had spent a lot of time on the phone with her. If you ask my wife, she will tell you that as soon as she walked in the waiting room and locked eyes with our ConnectCare3 Nurse Navigator, she knew it was her! They didn’t even need to introduce themselves!

Whether she was at an appointment or not, my Nurse Navigator always provided me with questions to ask my doctor. Sometimes, she would step in and ask questions on my behalf. Following appointments she provided my wife and me with a summary of the visit. My Nurse Navigator had a way of explaining my condition that I could understand.

When it was time for my spinal surgery in December of 2014, I felt more than ready. My Nurse Navigator had given us a list of top physicians; the list included one that was close to home, bringing us even more comfort. I am a maintenance mechanic at a golf course and I was able to report back to work in February of 2015. My wife and I can’t thank ConnectCare3 and our Nurse Navigator enough. She was the perfect listener when my wife didn’t know where else to turn. The comfort of having the right questions to ask and being prepared was comfort you cannot replace. My wife and I make it a point to tell anyone we can about the wonderful services offered by ConnectCare3. Many thanks to the staff at ConnectCare3 and especially to our Nurse Navigator... I’m not sure where we would be today without you!

Richard Marshall, York, PA