

CALCIUM FOR CHILDREN



Why is calcium important?

Calcium is needed for building strong bones and teeth during childhood. The heart, muscles and nerves also need calcium to work properly.

How much calcium does my child need?

Recommended Daily Calcium Intake

Age	RDI
7-12 months	270mg or 1½ serves a day
1-3 years	500mg or 2 serves a day
4-5 years	700mg or 3 serves a day

Examples of 1 serve dairy

1 serve dairy =



250mls of milk (or calcium fortified milk alternative),



2 slices of cheese,



¾ cup (220g) natural yoghurt or ½ cup ricotta cheese.



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Recommendations

- Breastfeed, if possible, for up to 2 years and beyond.
- If breastmilk is not available, use infant formula as the main drink until 12 months of age
- By 12 months, it's time to say goodbye to bottles. Offer milk and water in a cup.
- Children under 2 years, should have **full fat** milk and dairy products.
- Toddler formulas/milks are not needed unless recommended by a health professional.

Cow's milk alternatives

- Soy milk, fortified with calcium, is the best alternative because it is high in protein and added calcium.
- Other milk alternatives can be used after 12 months if it is full fat and calcium fortified.

Good sources of calcium

Animal based calcium sources

Source	Amount	Calcium level
Milk (regular)	1 cup 250ml	250mg
Hard yellow cheese	2 slices	250mg
Canned salmon, bones well crushed	½ cup (100g)	250mg
Sardines, canned	60g	250mg
Yoghurt (plain, low fat)	110g (1 tub)	(174mg)

Plant based calcium sources

Source	Amount	Calcium level
Tofu (firmed with Calcium Salts)	170g	544mg
Soy milk (fortified calcium)	250ml	250mg
Tahini, unhulled	1 Tbs (20g)	116-165mg
Cabbage or bok choy (cooked)	1 cup	130mg
Chickpeas (cooked)	1 cup	80mg
Broccoli (boiled)	1 cup	35mg

Reference: AUSNUT – Australian Food and Nutrient Database, FSANZ 2011-2013, USDA Food Database, 2009 and Australian Food Composition Database 2019.

Tips to boost calcium intake

- ✔ Offer a cup of plain milk or fruit smoothie daily (no need for added sugar).
- ✔ Mix natural yoghurt into smoothies, soups, dips, salads, with fresh fruit or breakfast cereals.
- ✔ Add milk on cereals and porridge.
- ✔ Add soy-based products like tofu to stir fries.
- ✔ Add grated cheese to sandwiches.



Link to other sources and information:

[Calcium and Vegan Diets](https://dietitiansaustralia.org.au)
(dietitiansaustralia.org.au)

www.karitane.com.au

www.healthybeginnings.net.au



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