

CALCIUM FOR A SLICE OF THE BETTER LIFE

Today's brunch or luncheon party guests expect more than food that looks good and tastes great. There's an additional ingredient required by our health-oriented society — food that is good for you.

For women especially, one of the many important factors in healthy eating is calcium intake.

Calcium is essential for building bones, muscle contraction, blood clotting and nerve function. If the body does not get enough, hormones will cause calcium to be released from the skeleton into the bloodstream to make it available for nerves and muscles. Long-term inadequate intakes of calcium have been associated with the development of osteoporosis — porous, brittle, breakable bones. For approximately one out of every four women over the age of 65, this disorder is all too well-known.

Although osteoporosis is most commonly observed in persons in their sixties, the disorder may actually begin in the mid-30's. The key to reducing potential risk is to build maximum bone mass before age 35. But no matter what the age, steps can be taken today to insure an adequate calcium intake.

1) EXAMINE YOUR DIET: The Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for calcium is 800 mg for adults. However, getting the RDA for calcium is not always easy, especially for women. In fact, two out of every three women over the age of 17 do not consume the RDA for calcium — most are getting only about 600 mg per day. But according to some experts, even this may not be enough for the average woman. These experts suggest the RDA be raised to 1,000 mg before menopause and 1,500 mg after menopause. In selecting foods rich in calcium, this chart may be helpful to you.

CALCIUM CONTENT OF SELECTED FOODS			
EXCELLENT SOURCES	AVERAGE SERVING SIZE	CALCIUM (mg)	PERCENT OF ADULT RDA (800 mg)
CHEESE:			
Cheddar, mild	1 oz.	204	25.5
Colby	1 oz.	194	24.2
Monterey Jack	1 oz.	212	26.5
Swiss	1 oz.	272	34.0
Processed Singles	1 oz.	167	20.9
MILK:			
Skim	1 cup	296	37.0
Whole	1 cup	288	36.0
Yogurt (low fat, plain)	8 oz.	347	43.4
FISH (with bones):			
Salmon, canned	3 oz.	167	20.9
Sardines	3 oz.	370	46.3
Collard Greens	1/2 cup	176	22.0
MODERATE SOURCES			
Oysters	3 oz.	81	10.1
Spinach, cooked	1/2 cup	88	11.0
Cottage Cheese (2% fat)	1/2 cup	77	9.6
Soybean Curds (tofu)	3 oz.	108	13.5
Almonds	1/4 cup	83	10.4
Broccoli, cooked	1/2 cup	68	8.5
Ice cream, vanilla	1/2 cup	88	11.0

2) BE AWARE OF CALCIUM LOSS FACTORS: Coffee, alcohol and nicotine from any source may increase calcium loss.

3) EXERCISE: Exercise involving movement and muscle pull is recommended. Interestingly, NASA medical consultants have noted an immediate loss of bone mass in astronauts spending even a short amount of time in zero gravity. Likewise, people who require complete bed rest for long periods of time lose calcium from the bone. Hence, walking, jogging, aerobic dancing, gymnastics, tennis and weight lifting all work on behalf of the bones. Exercising outdoors in the sun allows the body to make vitamin D, further benefiting calcium utilization.

To achieve an all around good diet which provides plenty of calcium, learn the best food sources of calcium and then incorporate these foods into your daily diet. (Milk and American cheese are convenient sources of calcium.) Incorporating these dairy products into the three meals of the day is an easy way to help you get the recommended allowance for calcium.

Other suggestions include: 1) adding cheese in sandwiches and salads; 2) snacking on cheese and crackers; and 3) using milk and cheese in casseroles.



BAKED VEGETABLE CROISSANT

- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1/2 cup chopped tomato
- 1/2 cup mushroom slices
- 1/4 cup chopped green pepper
- 1 tablespoon margarine
- 1/4 teaspoon dried basil leaves
- 4 croissants, split
- 4 American singles pasteurized process cheese food, cut in half diagonally

Saute vegetables in margarine; stir in basil. Fill croissants with vegetable mixture and process cheese food. Bake at 350°, 5 to 10 minutes or until process cheese food begins to melt. 4 sandwiches

TASTY TURKEY SANDWICH

- 1 3-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
- 2 tablespoons chopped red or green pepper
- 1 tablespoon chopped chives
- 4 whole-wheat bread slices
- Lettuce
- 4 cooked turkey slices
- Tomato slices
- 2 American singles pasteurized process cheese food

Combine cream cheese, peppers and chives, mixing until well blended. For each sandwich, top one bread slice with cream cheese mixture. Top with lettuce, meat, tomatoes, process cheese food slice and second bread slice. 2 sandwiches

SKILLET READY EGGS

- 3/4 cup chopped tomato
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 1/4 cup chopped green pepper
- 3 tablespoons margarine
- 8 eggs
- 6 American singles pasteurized process cheese food

Saute vegetables in 1 tablespoon margarine. Beat eggs until foamy; stir in two process cheese food slices, chopped. Melt remaining margarine in 10-inch skillet over medium heat. Add egg mixture. Cook, stirring occasionally, until eggs are set. Top with vegetable mixture and remaining process cheese food slices, cut in half diagonally. Continue cooking until process cheese food begins to melt. 4 servings

HAM DANDY

- 1 8-1/4-oz. can crushed pineapple, drained
- 1/4 cup applesauce
- 12 raisin cinnamon bread slices
- 12 singles pasteurized process cheese food
- 12 boiled ham slices
- margarine

Combine pineapple and applesauce; mix well. For each sandwich, cover one bread slice with one process cheese food slice, pineapple mixture, ham slices and second process cheese food slice. Top with second bread slice. Spread sandwich with margarine. Grill until lightly browned on both sides. 6 sandwiches