

Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis means there has been a loss of bone mass. Bone mass diminishes after the thirties. Females start out with less bone mass and lose it faster in the first few years after menopause, and, since they generally live longer than men, are more likely to suffer from fractures in later life.

Risk is increased for women who experience early menopause or who never become pregnant. White and oriental women with a family history of osteoporosis are at higher risk. Certain surgical procedures, medical conditions, and some medications can affect calcium absorption. Women who smoke or drink excess alcohol place themselves at increased risk. Smoking leads to diminished estrogen output and early menopause. Smokers also exercise less. Excess alcohol use contributes to a poor diet and leads to accidental fractures. Weight loss just prior to menopause may increase risk.

Risk is lower for those who are muscular, overweight, have used oral contraceptives for more than one year, or had several pregnancies. Taking estrogen for at least one year post menopause also seems to decrease risk.

To ensure that the calcium consumed in the diet is absorbed, adequate levels of Vitamin D from sunlight or diet also needs to be present. If supplemental vitamins are taken, no more than 400 IU of Vitamin D should be included; do not overdose. Avoiding diets high in meat, salt, & caffeine may improve the body's ability to utilize calcium. Estrogen or combination replacement therapy also improves the body's ability to retain the bone mass. Muscle building and weight bearing exercises such as walking also enhance bone mass retention.

Recommended Daily Allowances (in milligrams)

Young adults	800-1000
Pregnant or lactating	1300
Females, premenopause	1000
Females, post menopause	1200-1500

Sources of Calcium

Skim milk (8 oz)	302 mg
Skim milk Yogurt (1 cup)	452 mg
Cheddar (1 oz)	204 mg
Cottage cheese (1 cup)	120 mg

Some fruits, especially berries and tropical fruits, tend to have more calcium than others. Additionally, some juices are now fortified with calcium. Check (and periodically recheck) fruit juice labels for Calcium content. For comparison,

Awake imitation OJ (6 oz) 59 mg

Gatorade (6 oz)	23 mg
Orange jce plus (6 oz)	41 mg
Fortified OJ (8 oz)	320 mg
Tang (3 rounded teaspoons)	40 mg
Figs (5)	125 mg

Some vegetables, especially dark greens, contain quantities of Calcium. A small salad of spinach can contain 100 mg. A stalk of broccoli contains 160 mg.

Fish, seafood, (3 oz portions)

Sardines, with bones	400 mg
Salmon, canned, with bones	170 mg
Scallops	110 mg
Shrimp, raw	50 mg

Cereals, may be fortified:

Cream of Wheat (3/4 cup)	38 mg
Mayo (3/4 cup)	94 mg
Instant oats (1 pkt)	163 mg
Cheerios (1 oz)	48 mg
Life (1 oz)	99 mg

Supplemental tablets, some of which also contain Vitamin D, range from 100 to 600 mg of Calcium. Some examples:

Calcium lactate, as in Calcet
Calcium carbonate, as in Caltrate, Os-cal, and Tums
Calcium phosphate, as in Posture
Calcium citrate, as in Citracal