

Calcium and Vitamin D for Patients with Breast Cancer

Certain types of breast cancer treatment can increase bone thinning or bone loss. This raises your risk of a broken or fractured bone.

Getting the right amount of calcium and vitamin D may help lower your risk of a broken or fractured bone. This factsheet tells about the amount of calcium and vitamin D you need. It also lists foods that are good sources of calcium and vitamin D, as well as supplements you can take if your levels are still low.

How much calcium and vitamin D do I need?

Calcium helps you have strong bones. Vitamin D helps your body absorb calcium. The table below lists the recommended daily intake (RDI) for different people. Some people need more calcium and vitamin D than others. The amount is based on age, phase of menstruation, and use of certain drugs.

	Recommended Daily Intake (RDI)	
	Calcium	Vitamin D
Before Menopause	1000 mg	800 IU
Over age 50 years or after menopause	1200 mg	800 IU
Aromatase Inhibitor use (a drug that blocks estrogen)	1200 mg	800 IU
Bisphosphonate use (a drug to help bone disease)	1200 mg	800 IU

Note: IU stands for “international units.” It is used to measure the amount of vitamins and minerals in a pill or capsule. “Mg” stands for milligrams.

Foods with calcium

Eating enough healthy foods is a good way to help keep your bones strong. The table below lists foods that are high in calcium. It also lists the amount to give you an idea of how much you need to add up to your RDI.

Food	Amount of Calcium
Fruits and Vegetables	
Leafy greens (8 oz)	160-360 mg
Broccoli (8 oz)	60 mg
Oranges (1 whole)	55 mg
Carrots (4 oz)	36 mg
Raisins (3 oz)	62 mg
Banana (1 medium)	12 mg
Meat and Seafood	
Salmon (3 oz)	180 mg
Shrimp (3 oz)	125 mg
Chicken (4 oz)	17 mg
Red meat (4 oz)	7 mg
Dairy Products	
Low-fat yogurt (6 oz)	310 mg
Milk (8 oz)	300 mg
Cheddar cheese (1 oz)	205 mg
Cottage cheese (4 oz)	105 mg
Frozen yogurt (8 oz)	105 mg
Ice cream (8 oz)	85 mg
Nuts and Seeds	
Almonds (1 oz)	75 mg
Walnuts (1 oz)	28 mg

Many juices, breads, and cereals have extra calcium added. Check the product labels for amounts.

What if I do not get enough calcium from my food?

Most people get the amount of calcium they need when they eat different types of healthy foods.

If you don't think you are getting enough calcium, supplements can help. You can get these products from the drugstore without a prescription. There are two common types of calcium supplements—calcium carbonate and calcium citrate. Calcium carbonate does not work well with some medicines. Read the table below and talk to your doctor for help choosing the right product for you.

Calcium Carbonate	Calcium Citrate
<p>Take with food</p> <p>Do not take if you use acid-suppressing medicines such as omeprazole, pantoprazole, famotidine, and ranitidine</p> <p>Causes constipation more often than calcium citrate</p>	<p>Take with or without food</p> <p>Safe to take if you use acid-suppressing medicines</p> <p>Sometimes causes constipation</p>

Foods with vitamin D

The table below lists foods that are high in vitamin D. It also lists the amount to give you an idea of how much you need to add up to your RDI.

Food	Amount of Vitamin D
Fortified milk, soy milk, and orange juice (8 oz)	100 IU
Yogurt (8 oz)	80 IU
Salmon (3 oz)	440 IU
Canned tuna	150 IU
Halibut (3 oz)	510 IU
Catfish (3 oz)	425 IU

What if I do not get enough vitamin D from my food?

Many people get the right amount of vitamin D when they eat different types of healthy foods.

A blood test can show if you need more vitamin D. If you need more, your doctor may suggest a vitamin D supplement. You can get these products from the drugstore without a prescription. Ask your doctor for help in choosing the right product for you.