

# Calcium and Vitamin D

**Calcium and Vitamin D work together to keep us healthy.**

## **Our bodies need calcium for...**

- Strong bones and teeth
- Muscles to contract
- The heart to beat
- Blood to clot
- Nerves to send messages
- Blood pressure control

## **Our bodies need Vitamin D to...**

- Properly absorb calcium
- Help calcium build strong bones and teeth
- Help regulate our immune system

Together, Vitamin D and calcium offer protection against osteoporosis, help prevent some types of cancer, and may aid in weight management.

## **How much calcium and Vitamin D do we need?**

### **Calcium:**

- Most adults, including males over 50, need 1,000 milligrams (mg) of calcium each day.



- For women over 50, the goal is 1,200 mg of calcium per day.
- Read the Nutrition Facts Label on products for calcium. Look at the Percentage Daily Value (DV). Add a zero to the percent given. Example: 30% DV = 300 mg calcium.

### **Vitamin D:**

- Most adults, up to age 70, need 600 international units (IU) of Vitamin D each day.
- Men and women over age 70 should increase to 800 IU daily.



### **Great sources of calcium and Vitamin D:**

#### **Calcium:**

- Deep green vegetables (broccoli, kale, collard greens, etc.) provide the highest calcium sources for the lowest amount of calories
- Low-fat dairy products (If lactose intolerant, try lactose-free milk, drink smaller amounts of milk at a time, or try soymilk/soy beverages)
- Calcium-fortified foods and beverages (breads, cereals, and fruit juice)
- 1,200 mg is about 2 cups of fat-free or low-fat milk, 1 cup of low-fat yogurt, and 1½ ounces of low-fat cheese



## Vitamin D:

You get Vitamin D in three ways: through the skin, from the diet, and from supplements or fortified foods. If you are over 50, if you have dark skin, or if you don't get exposed to enough sunlight (15 minutes per day), get extra Vitamin D from:

- Fatty fish (salmon, mackerel, sardines, tuna, eel)
- Fish liver oils (cod liver oil)
- Shitake mushrooms
- Eggs
- Vitamin D-fortified foods (cereals, breads, margarine, milk, and/or supplements)



## What about supplements?

For most people, supplements and calcium- or Vitamin D-fortified foods should add to, not replace, foods that naturally have calcium/Vitamin D. You should talk with your health care provider about any dietary supplements you are taking.