



Vegetarian Calcium Food Sources

Overview and Recommendations

1. **Calcium for health.** In addition to its important role in bone health, calcium is required for vascular, muscle, and nerve function.
2. **Calcium intakes for vegetarians.** Evidence indicates that the calcium intake of vegetarians, who often rely on dairy products as a main food source, is similar or even higher than non-vegetarians. Thus, calcium intake may not be an issue.
3. **Calcium intakes for vegans.** Calcium intakes of vegans, who avoid dairy products, tends to be lower and possibly below recommended intakes. Some studies indicate that vegans may have a higher risk of bone fracture, although more research needs to occur in this area.
4. **Meeting calcium needs for vegans.** Vegans can replace dairy servings with other calcium-rich foods and beverages, such as calcium-fortified plant milks, fortified juices, tofu made with calcium sulfate, and calcium-rich vegetables. However, it's important to note that spinach and Swiss chard may be poor sources of calcium intake due to poor absorption caused by high oxalate content. Cruciferous vegetables, such as broccoli and kale, are sources of calcium that are highly absorbable.
5. **When to take a calcium supplement.** Calcium supplements may be an option for people who have a hard time meeting their calcium needs. Aim for supplementation at levels needed only to fill the nutrient gap, as some evidence links over-supplementation with health concerns. Discuss all supplements with your health care provider.

Tips to Meet Your Needs

1. **Aim for two to three daily servings of calcium-rich foods, such as plant-based fortified milk, tofu, and orange juice (check the nutrition label for calcium); and green leafy vegetables, almonds and broccoli.** If you're vegetarian, dairy products such as cottage cheese, yogurt, cheese, and milk are calcium-rich options.
2. **Consider taking a calcium supplement, if you're not able to meet these daily servings.** Take a supplement at levels that fills your daily gap. For example, if you only consume one serving of calcium-rich foods per day, you may want to take a calcium supplement that meets 50% of the RDA.

Calcium RDA	
Life Stage Group	Calcium (mg/d)
Infants: 0 to 6 months 6 to 12 months	200 260
Children: 1 to 3 years 4 to 8 years	700 1,000
Males: 9 to 18 years 19 to 70 years >71 years	1,300 1,000 1,200
Females: 9 to 18 years 19 to 50 years >71 years	1,300 1,000 1,200
Pregnancy: 14 to 18 years 19 to 50 years	1,300 1,000
Lactation: 14 to 18 years 19 to 50 years	1,300 1,000

Courtesy of Sharon Palmer, RD, The Plant-Powered Dietitian™

Vegan Calcium Food Sources

Food	Serving	Calcium (mg)
Ready-to-eat cereal, fortified with calcium	¾ - 1 cup	100 - 1000*
Almond milk, fortified with calcium	1 cup	450*
Soy yogurt, fortified with calcium	1 cup	450*
Soymilk, original, fortified with calcium	1 cup	300 - 500*
Tofu, regular, processed with calcium	½ cup	434*
Orange juice, fortified with calcium	1 cup	349*
Black strap molasses	2 tablespoons	230
Almond yogurt, fortified with calcium	170 grams	200*
Tempeh	1 cup	184
Tahini	2 tablespoons	128
Almond butter	2 tablespoons	111
Turnip greens, raw	1 cup	104
Kale, raw	1 cup	100
Edamame, frozen, prepared	1 cup	98
Almonds	¼ cup	94
Figs	5 medium	88
Garbanzo beans, cooked	1 cup	80
Pinto beans, cooked	1 cup	79
Bok choy, raw	1 cup	74
Mustard greens, raw	1 cup	64
Black beans, cooked	1 cup	46
Broccoli, raw	1 cup	43
Corn tortillas	2 each	39

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Food	Serving	Calcium (mg)
Milk, non-fat	1 cup	305
Yogurt, non-fat	6 ounces	258
Cheese, Swiss	1 ounce	224
Cottage cheese, low-fat	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	103
Ice cream, vanilla	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	84
Chocolate pudding, refrigerated	4 ounces	55
Cream cheese	2 tablespoons	28

*May vary depending on product

All nutritional information from USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference or food manufacturer labeling.

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