



## CALCIUM

### What is calcium?

- Calcium is essential for strong bones and teeth.
- Calcium also plays an important role in heart, muscle, blood and nervous system function.
- Without enough calcium in your diet, your body will withdraw calcium from your bones. Over time, your bones become brittle and you may develop osteoporosis.

### Dairy facts:

#### 1. Dairy is *not* high in sugar

Unflavoured milk, yoghurt and cheese do not contain added sugar, but they do contain a natural sugar called *lactose*. Unless you are lactose intolerant, this type of sugar is perfectly healthy in a balanced diet.

#### 2. Dairy *does not* cause weight gain

Weight loss diets should include dairy in order to meet nutrient needs. Research has shown that people who include at least 3 serves of milk, yogurt and/or cheese a day in a calorie-controlled diet lose more weight than those who eat less dairy foods.

#### 3. People who are lactose intolerant can still consume dairy products

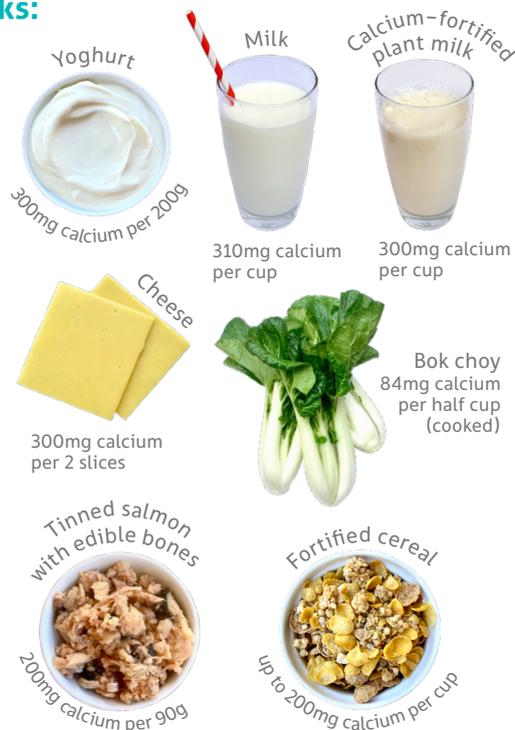
Lactose intolerant does not mean dairy intolerant. Hard cheeses and cultured dairy products, such as yoghurt, are generally well-tolerated by people with lactose intolerance. Lactose free milk is also a good option.

**99% of calcium is stored in bones and teeth, 1% in blood**

### Calcium rich food and drinks:

#### How to increase your calcium intake:

- Have yoghurt as a side dish with meals or make yoghurt-based dips
- Have a smoothie made with milk and yoghurt or cheese and crackers as a snack
- Add cheese to pancakes, omelettes, casseroles, pasta, and vegetable dishes
- Add milk or milk powder to casseroles, soups, and sauces
- Enjoy salmon and green leafy vegetables for dinner such as bok choy
- Check that non-dairy sources are fortified with calcium



### DID YOU KNOW?

- Calcium is absorbed at different rates from different foods. This is called 'bioavailability'.
- Milk, yoghurt and cheese have good bioavailability.
- One cup of milk, for example, contains 310mg of calcium and 100mg of it is absorbed – it has high bioavailability.
- Half a cup of cooked spinach, on the other hand, contains 129mg of calcium but only 7mg of it is absorbed – it has low bioavailability.



One cup (250mL) milk = 310mg calcium, 100mg of this is absorbed



1/2 cup cooked spinach = 129mg calcium, 7mg calcium absorbed

**Less than half of all Australian adults get their recommended daily intake of calcium**