

understanding Calcium & Vitamin D

with Lauren Moller-Seat, RDN

IT'S ALWAYS RECOMMENDED that you to try to meet your nutritional needs through diet rather than supplements, but occasionally a supplement is needed to “fill the gaps.” But, when it comes to supplements, there can be too much of a “good” thing, so being mindful of supplement dosages is important.

Calcium is difficult to absorb in dosages greater than 500mg at a time, so supplements ideally should provide less than 500mg in a serving. Vitamin D is needed to help with the absorption of calcium. Calcium can slow or prevent the absorption of iron, so if you are taking other supplements, be mindful of timing. (Taking calcium and any other vitamin supplement at least two hours apart is recommended).

The Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) for adults for calcium is 1,000-1,200mg/day. Consider what food sources you may already be consuming regularly and think about adjusting your supplements as needed.

Vitamin D levels can be checked with a blood test. If your levels are below 20ng/mL, your provider may recommend the use of supplements to bring your vitamin D levels up to a healthy range. (As always,

A DIET RICH in calcium—and with vitamin D to help you absorb it—builds strong bones and teeth. Calcium helps the blood clot normally, supports muscle and nerve function and helps regulate your heartbeat.



if you're concerned about your vitamin D levels, be sure talk with your doctor for dosage recommendations.)

Research indicates that unless you are deficient (or very low) in vitamin D, taking supplements doesn't tend to add additional bone-strengthening benefits.

Vitamin D supplements are available as D3 or D2. (The D3 form of vitamin D comes from fatty, animal-sourced foods. Your skin



for good food and supplement choices.) Generally, D3 is more efficient at raising vitamin D stores in the body.

Because vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin—meaning that fat is needed for this vitamin to be absorbed by and transported throughout the body—it is better to take vitamin D with a meal that contains some fat. The RDA for adults for vitamin D is 600 IU (15mcg) and 800 IU (20mcg) for adults over 70.

also produces D3 when exposed to sunlight or ultraviolet light. Vitamin D2 comes from plants and plant-based foods. *Please see the chart below for my best suggestions*

Recommended Foods and Supplements

Good Food Sources for Calcium	Good Food Sources for Vitamin D	Recommended* Supplements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk • Cheese • Yogurt • Fortified plant-based milks or orange juice • Canned fish with soft bones • Soybeans • Almonds • Cooked greens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fatty fish like salmon • Fortified foods such as milk or orange juice • Dairy and plant milks, such as oat, almond, and soy milk • Eggs • Mushrooms • Cereal <p>NOTE: Few foods are rich in vitamin D, which is why it's easy for adults to be deficient.</p> <p>The body can convert sunlight into vitamin D, but due to seasonal changes, age, melanin levels and risk of skin cancer, this is often not sufficient.</p>	<p>CALCIUM + VITAMIN D: Bayer Citracal Petites (Two caplets contain 400mg Ca and 500IU Vitamin D.)</p> <p>CALCIUM ONLY: Kirkland Signature Adult Gummies Calcium (Two gummies contain 1,000IU vitamin D3 and 500mg Calcium.)</p> <p>Solaray Calcium Citrate (Four capsules contain 1,000mg Ca.)</p> <p>VITAMIN D ONLY: Source naturals Vitamin D3 Liquid Drops (One drop provides 222 IU. Store in the fridge to slow the loss of potency.)</p>

*These recommendations are based on third-party testing conducted by [Consumer Lab](https://www.consumerlab.com).

Editor's note: The information provided in this newsletter is for educational purposes only. Please speak with your health care team about your specific dietary and health needs.