

# CALCIUM

Calcium, the most abundant mineral in the body, is required for the maintenance of good health. While calcium is found naturally in foods, it is also added to others, available as a dietary supplement, and found in some medications. Although the body uses calcium to perform several crucial functions in the body, 99% of the body's calcium is stored in bones and teeth to support their structure and function.

## In the body, calcium is required for:

- ~ Bone Formation ~
- ~ Teeth Formation ~
- ~ Muscle Contractions ~
- ~ Blood Vessel Expansion and Contraction ~
- ~ Secretion of Hormones and Enzymes ~
- ~ Transmitting Nerve Impulses ~

## RECOMMENDED INTAKE

<u>AGE</u>	<u>Mg/day</u>
4-8 years	800 mg
9-13 years	1,300 mg
14-18 years	1,300 mg
19-50 years	1,000 mg
50+ years	1,200 mg

## Calcium and Health

**Bone Health** – Bones increase in size and mass during adolescents with peak bone mass occurring around age 30. When calcium consumption is low, our bones start to break down in order to maintain normal biological function throughout the body. This leads to *osteoporosis*, a disorder characterized by porous and fragile bones.

**Blood Pressure and Hypertension** – Several studies have shown a connection between increased calcium consumption and lowering one's risk for hypertension (high blood pressure). In one study, those who consumed a diet rich in calcium and fruits/veggies saw the greatest decrease in blood pressure.

**Weight Management** – Although much of the data is inconclusive, some studies indicate increased calcium consumption may help with weight management. Researchers believe that calcium from food or supplements may bind to fat in the digestive tract and prevent absorption.

**Kidney Stones** – Kidney stones in the urinary tract are most commonly composed of calcium oxalate. Research shows too much OR too little calcium can cause kidney stone formation.