



Get More Calcium and Vitamin D Today!

By Lanette Kovachi, MS, RD and Jessie Erwin

There is exciting bread news at SUBWAY® restaurants! Our bread is now fortified with bone-building power-houses, calcium and vitamin D. Each 6-inch serving provides 30% of your daily value of calcium (that is the amount in one glass of milk) and 20% of your daily value vitamin D. This is not only good news for our bread, but also for your bones! Read on to see just how important these two nutrients are for your health.

Why is Calcium and Vitamin D Important for Healthy Bones?

Ninety-nine percent of your body's calcium is stored in your bones and teeth. Not getting enough calcium means weak, porous bones and increases your risk of osteoporosis. Consuming adequate calcium is especially important for children and teenagers during their growing years, while they are building bone and storing calcium for the rest of their lives. Getting plenty of calcium when you're older can help minimize calcium loss from your bones. Aim for 1,000 milligrams (mg) calcium per day (1,300 mg for children 9-18 and 1,200 mg for women 51+ and men 71+).

What About Vitamin D?

This vitamin helps the body to absorb calcium and build and maintain strong bones. Vitamin D is known as the "sunshine vitamin" since your body makes it when your skin is exposed to sunlight. In fact, 10-15 minutes of sunshine exposure (without sunscreen) three times a week can meet your daily requirements. During colder months, especially in the northern hemisphere, the sun is not strong enough for your body to produce vitamin D. In warmer months, the sun is strong enough to produce vitamin D in your body; however, use of sunscreen not only blocks the UV rays but also vitamin D production. Since regular sunscreen use reduces risk of skin cancer, fortified foods and a vitamin D supplement may be necessary to meet your vitamin D needs. Try to consume 600 International Units (IU) per day (800 IU per day if you're over 71).

How Much Calcium and Vitamin D Are YOU Getting?

According to the Centers for Disease Control, on average, men and women in the U.S. consume only 863 mg calcium per day. In addition, the Institute of Medicine states that less than 1/3 of older people meet the recommended adequate intake for vitamin D based on total intake, including supplements.

So, What Can You Do to Make Sure You Get Enough Calcium and Vitamin D?

Enjoying a meal at your local SUBWAY® restaurant is a great start. Since April 2011, all regular breads are fortified with calcium and vitamin D. Also, a delicious English Muffin Melt breakfast sandwich can provide 20-25% of your calcium needs. You can also bump up your calcium and vitamin D intake with the foods listed below.

Of To meet your daily calcium requirements, try to aim for at least 3-4 servings per day from the below list – each serving has about 200-300 mg of calcium:

- Low fat or nonfat milk, lactose-free milk, or calcium-fortified soy milk (1 cup)
- Fortified orange juice (1 cup)
- Low fat or nonfat plain yogurt (6 ounces)
- Low fat cheese (1.5 ounces)
- Fish (such as sardines or salmon), canned with bones (3-5 ounces)
- Firm tofu, made with calcium sulfate (3/4 cup)
- Fortified cereals (amount varies – check nutrition label)
- Collard greens or spinach (1 cup, cooked)
- One 6-inch SUBWAY® Sandwich
- One SUBWAY® English Muffin Melt Sandwich

The best sources of vitamin D are:

- Fortified milk or orange juice (100 IU per cup)
- Fatty fish (such as salmon, tuna, and mackerel – 150-450 IU per 3 ounces) and fish liver oils (1300 IU per tablespoon)
- Mushrooms exposed to UV light
- Fortified breakfast cereals (amount varies – average 40 IU per serving)
- One 6-inch SUBWAY® Sandwich (120 IU)

If you have trouble meeting your calcium and vitamin D needs through diet alone, supplements can help. To avoid excess intake, stick to the daily recommended value for each nutrient. For calcium, make sure to read the label carefully as some calcium supplements are better absorbed and tolerated with food. Do not take more than 500 mg calcium at one time. Vitamin D supplements should be taken with a meal or snack, since some dietary fat is needed for absorption.

Not Just Strong Bones.

You may have already known calcium and vitamin D are important for bone health, but did you know that they might also help your heart? Researchers have linked low calcium levels to high blood pressure, and have linked vitamin D deficiency to increased risk of cardiovascular disease.

Consuming enough calcium may also have other health benefits, such as lowering risk of colon cancer and helping to keep weight off. Low levels of vitamin D have been associated with higher risk of diabetes, multiple sclerosis, and poor birth outcomes.

So, don't wait any longer. Make sure each and every day you strive to meet your vitamin D and calcium needs, not just for your bones but for overall good health!