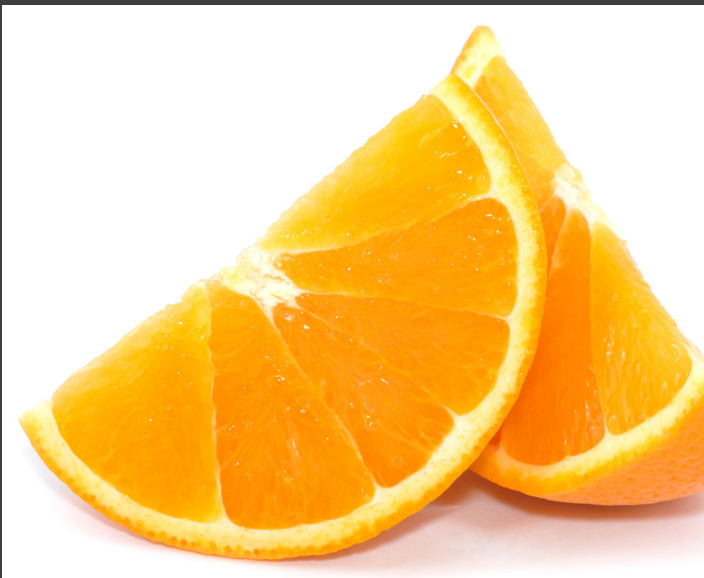


# CALCIUM

*assessment tool*



*for Canadian postmenopausal women*

Calcium Assessment Tool for Canadian postmenopausal women  
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For questions or comments about the Calcium Assessment Tool, please email [osteoporosis@uhn.ca](mailto:osteoporosis@uhn.ca). For more information about the Osteoporosis Program at University Health Network/Mount Sinai Hospital, please visit <http://www.uhn.ca/osteoporosis>.

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Calcium Calculator™ B.C. Dairy Foundation 2002

# Calcium Assessment Tool *for Canadian postmenopausal women*

## The role of calcium in bone health

Our bones and teeth are mainly made up of calcium. If we do not get enough calcium from our diet, our body takes it away from our bones and teeth, leaving them weak and fragile over time.



A calcium-rich diet helps in maintaining bone mass and preventing bone loss. Currently, Osteoporosis Canada recommends **1,000 mg of calcium per day for adults 19-50 years of age and 1,200 mg of calcium per day for adults over 50 years of age**. These amounts include calcium from both food sources, multi-vitamin-mineral supplements, and calcium supplements.

It is important to note that there is no additional health benefit in taking more calcium than these Recommended Dietary Allowances. In fact, ingesting **too much calcium, especially from calcium supplements, can be harmful** and may lead to an increased risk of kidney stones, heart attacks, excess calcium in the blood, and lower absorption of other essential minerals. Health Canada reminds Canadians that total calcium intake per day should remain below 2,000 mg to avoid possible adverse effects.

## Calcium Assessment Tool

The Calcium Assessment Tool (CAT) is a modified version of the Calcium Calculator™ and is used to measure calcium intake from food.

Dr. Angela M. Cheung, Director of the University Health Network/Mount Sinai Hospital Osteoporosis Program, and her research team have validated the CAT for use in postmenopausal women in Canada. Validation in this case refers to how accurately the CAT is able to measure the amount of calcium a person gets from their food, compared to a gold standard such as a detailed food diary. The results of the validation study showed that **the CAT can help in identifying women who need calcium supplements as well as those who do not**.

## How to use the CAT

The CAT asks about your consumption of the most common calcium-rich foods women consume on a regular basis.

For each food item, consider if you eat the item on a **weekly basis**, and if so, how many servings you have had in a **typical week in the past month**. Serving sizes are noted beside each food item. Record this information in the calcium food chart. If you consume a certain food regularly, **but less than once a week**, record 0 servings for that food item.

Once you have finished entering the number of servings of all food items into the calcium food chart, you can calculate your total calcium intake.

# Calcium Assessment Tool *for Canadian postmenopausal women*

## Serving sizes

Use the following measurements as a guide for estimating serving sizes:

**1 cup** = size of your fist



**$\frac{3}{4}$  cup** = size of a tennis ball



**$\frac{1}{2}$  cup** = amount you can hold in your cupped hand



**$\frac{1}{3}$  cup** = large egg



**$\frac{1}{4}$  cup** = size of a golf ball



**1 $\frac{1}{4}$ " cube** of cheese = size of your thumb



**1 pancake/waffle** = size of a CD-ROM or DVD



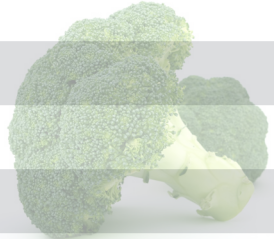


**1 can of fish** = size of a deck of cards





# Calcium Assessment Tool *for Canadian postmenopausal women*

## Calcium Food Chart

Do you eat/drink the calcium-rich food items listed below on a weekly basis? If yes, enter the number of servings you have had in a typical week in the past month and calculate the total amount of calcium from that food item using the table below:

Calcium-rich foods	Portion size	Mg of calcium per portion	Number of portions in a typical week	Total mg of calcium
Bread (bagels, buns and pita bread are counted as two slices)	2 slices	50 mg		
Broccoli, cooked	¾ cup	50 mg		
Kidney beans, lima beans, lentils	1 cup	50 mg		
Orange (fruit, not juice)	1 medium	50 mg		
Tahini (sesame seed paste)	2 tbsp	50 mg		
Bok choy or kale, cooked	½ cup	75 mg		
Chickpeas	1 cup	75 mg		
Cottage cheese (regular, low fat, or fat free)	½ cup	75 mg		
Ice cream	½ cup	75 mg		
Parmesan cheese	1 tbsp	75 mg		
Almonds	¼ cup (20-25 almonds)	75 mg		
Baked beans, soybeans, white beans	1 cup	150 mg		
Ice milk (gelato), frozen yogurt (regular, low fat, or fat free)	½ cup	150 mg		
Pancakes or waffles, made with milk	3 medium	150 mg		
Pudding, made with milk	½ cup	150 mg		
Soft and semi-soft cheese (not cream cheese) such as feta, mozzarella, Camembert (regular, low fat, or fat free)	1¼" cube	150 mg		
Soup, made with milk	1 cup	150 mg		
Tofu, made with calcium (if not made with calcium, use half the amount of calcium per serving, i.e. 75 mg)	3 oz.	150 mg		

Calcium-rich foods	Portion size	Mg of calcium per portion	Number of portions in a typical week	Total mg of calcium
Firm cheese such as cheddar, Swiss, Gouda (regular, low fat, or fat free)	1¼" cube	250 mg		
Processed cheese slices (regular, low fat, or fat free)	2 slices	250 mg		
Salmon or sardines, canned with bones	½ can	250 mg		
Yogurt, fruit-flavored (regular, low fat, or fat free)	¾ cup	250 mg		
Milk (skim, 1%, 2%, whole, buttermilk, or chocolate)	1 cup	300 mg		
Calcium-fortified beverages (e.g. soy, orange juice, rice)	1 cup	300 mg		
Skim milk powder	⅓ cup	300 mg		
Yogurt, plain (regular, low fat, or fat free)	¾ cup	300 mg		
Supplements containing calcium	-	___ mg		
Total milligrams of calcium in a typical week: _____				
<b>Milligrams of calcium per day</b> (above amount divided by 7): _____				

## Am I getting enough calcium?

Currently, Osteoporosis Canada recommends **1,000 mg** of calcium per day for adults 19-50 years of age and **1,200 mg** of calcium per day for adults over 50 years of age.

