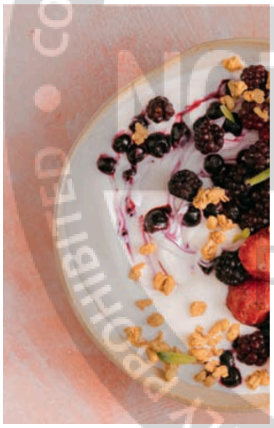
- Vitamins / Pregnancy

The beauty benefits of calcium



Calcium is widely recognised for its role in promoting strong bones and teeth, but this essential mineral is involved in much more than just skeletal health. It plays a crucial part in maintaining healthy skin, hair and nails, while also supporting a range of vital functions in the body. From muscle contraction to nerve signalling, calcium is required in varying amounts at different stages of life, making it an indispensable nutrient for overall wellbeing.

The beauty benefits of calcium

Skin health: Calcium is a crucial mineral for maintaining healthy, hydrated skin. It supports skin cell turnover and regulates the production of sebum, the skin's natural oil. This helps create a balanced, protective barrier that locks in moisture and guards against dryness, inflammation and environmental damage. Calcium also plays a role in the skin's wound healing.

Hair strength and growth: Calcium contributes to keratin production, the protein that forms the structural foundation of hair. A deficiency in calcium can lead to brittle, lifeless hair prone to breakage. Additionally, calcium supports the function of enzymes that stimulate the hair follicle cycle, promoting healthy hair growth.

Strong nails: Calcium is key to the formation and strength of nails. If your nails are weak, brittle or split easily, it may indicate inadequate calcium levels.

Holistic beauty from the inside-out

As a naturopath, I believe external radiance is a reflection of internal health. Calcium also supports key internal functions, including muscle contraction, hormone regulation and nerve signalling, all of which impact vitality, energy and the body's ability to regenerate.

Life events and hormonal shifts can significantly affect calcium requirements. Here are some phases of life where calcium requirements increase:

- **Pregnancy:** During pregnancy, calcium requirements increase significantly to support the developing baby's skeletal system. The mother's body prioritises the baby, meaning if dietary calcium is insufficient, it will draw from the mother's bone reserves. This can lead to calcium depletion, manifesting as brittle nails, hair thinning and dull skin in the mother. Pregnant women require approximately 1000mg of calcium daily, with teens (who are still building their own bone density) needing up to 1300 mg.
- **Breastfeeding:** Calcium continues to play a crucial role postpartum. Breastfeeding mothers transfer calcium through their milk to support the infant's growth. If calcium intake is inadequate, it can lead to temporary bone density loss in the mother, affecting overall health.
- **Menopause:** Post-menopause, women experience a drop in oestrogen levels, which affects calcium absorption and bone health. This stage also makes the skin thinner, less elastic and more prone to ageing. Maintaining adequate calcium intake can slow these changes and preserve skin and nail integrity.

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Calcium-rich foods to incorporate in your diet

Dairy products: Milk, cheese and yoghurt are excellent sources of calcium. They are highly bioavailable, meaning the body absorbs calcium from these sources efficiently.

Leafy greens: Kale, spinach, collard greens and bok choy are rich in calcium and loaded with other beauty-enhancing nutrients like vitamin C and antioxidants.

However, some greens (such as spinach) contain oxalates, which can inhibit calcium absorption. Pair them with vitamin C-rich foods like lemon juice to counteract this effect.

Seafood: Sardines and salmon with bones are excellent calcium sources. They also provide omega-3 fatty acids, which support healthy skin and scalp.

Nuts and seeds: Almonds, chia seeds and sesame seeds (including tahini) provide a calcium boost along with healthy fats for glowing skin and shiny hair.

Legumes: White beans, chickpeas and lentils are calcium-rich and excellent for heart health.

Fruits: Oranges and figs contain moderate amounts of calcium, while also offering hydration and antioxidants to support overall beauty.

Enhancing calcium absorption

Pair with vitamin D: Vitamin D is essential for calcium absorption. Foods like fatty fish, egg yolks and exposure to sunlight can help maintain optimal vitamin D levels.

Magnesium: Magnesium works in tandem with calcium. Include magnesium-rich foods such as avocados, bananas and greens in your diet for a synergistic effect.

Avoid calcium blockers

Excessive caffeine, alcohol and high-sodium diets can interfere with calcium absorption. Moderation is key.

Calcium's benefits extend well beyond supporting strong bones. Whether you're in a stage of life that demands more calcium or you're focused on improving your health from the inside-out, ensuring an adequate intake of this mineral is key. By fuelling your body with whole, nutrient-rich foods, you can promote beauty from within, supporting both your health and appearance in the most natural way.



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