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Food Sources of Calcium

Dairy is not the best source of calcium

It is a widespread nutritional myth that dairy produce is a good source of calcium. Milk products do contain a fair amount of calcium, particularly hard cheese but, because of the calcium to magnesium ratio in these products, the calcium is not well absorbed. As well as inhibiting the body's ability to absorb magnesium, eating dairy foods in excess can cause the body to produce too much mucus. As you can see in the table of calcium rich foods below, seaweeds and other land plants offer the best sources of bioavailable calcium.

Calcium inhibitors

Generally it is not that a person is not eating enough calcium - it is one of the most widely occurring nutrients in our diet. It is more the case that lifestyle choices and dietary habits might interfering with the body's ability to absorb calcium. Things that inhibit the absorption of calcium are

- Coffee, soft drinks and diuretics
- Excesses of protein, especially meat
- Refined sugar or too much of any concentrated sweetener or sweet flavoured food
- Alcohol, cannabis, cigarettes and other intoxicants
- Too little or too much exercise
- Excess salt
- The **Solanum** (deadly nightshade) genus of vegetables - tomatoes in particular, but also potatoes, aubergines, peppers, courgettes - they all contain the calcium inhibitor solanine.

Table of food calcium sources

Food Source (100mg portions)	Calcium in Milligrams
Hijiki	1,400
Wakame	1,300
Kelp	1,099
Kombu	800
Hard cheese	682
Dried Wheatgrass or Barleygrass	514
Sardines	443
Agar-Agar	400
Nori	260
Almonds	233
Amaranth grain	222
Hazelnuts	209

Parsley	203
Turnip greens	191
Brazil nuts	186
Sunflower seeds	174
Watercress	151
Chick peas	150
Quinoa	141
Pistachio nuts	135
Pinto beans	135
Kale	134
Spirulina	131
Yoghurt	121
Milk	119
Sesame seeds	110
Chinese cabbage	106
Tofu	100
Walnuts	99
Okra	82
Salmon	79
Cottage cheese	60
Eggs	56
Brown rice	33
Chicken	11
Mackerel	5

Source: Paul Pitchford, *Healing with Wholefood*

How to use Hijiki

Hijiki is the richest food source of calcium. It is virtually tasteless, yet has a slight seaweed smell. It comes in an easy to use dried form. Hijiki can be added straight from the packet into soups and stews or cooked along with brown rice. Simmer hijiki along with chosen food for at least 15 minutes.



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