

# The Medical Letter®

## On Drugs and Therapeutics

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## IN BRIEF

### Calcium and Vitamin D to Prevent Osteoporotic Fractures

The US Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) has issued a Draft Recommendation Statement saying, in effect, that community-dwelling women and men should not take calcium and vitamin D supplements for primary prevention of osteoporotic fractures because the evidence that they are helpful is insufficient and they increase the risk of kidney stones. The Medical Letter has said previously that there is no evidence that patients with an adequate intake of calcium (1000-1200 mg/day) and vitamin D (600-800 IU/day) will benefit from taking supplements.<sup>1</sup>

**Table 1. Calcium Content of Some Foods<sup>1</sup>**

| Food                                     | Serving Size | Calcium Content (mg) |
|--|--------------|----------------------|
| Yogurt, lowfat, fruit-flavored           | 8 oz         | 345                  |
| Milk, skim                               | 1 cup        | 299                  |
| Collards, cooked                         | 1 cup        | 266                  |
| Swiss cheese                             | 1 oz         | 219                  |
| Mozzarella cheese, part-skim             | 1 oz         | 207                  |
| Cheddar cheese                           | 1 oz         | 204                  |
| Creamed cottage cheese                   | 1 cup        | 174                  |
| Tofu, raw, firm                          | ¼ block      | 163                  |
| Oatmeal, instant (fortified)             | 1 packet     | 142                  |
| Breakfast cereals, Cheerios <sup>2</sup> | 1 cup        | 122                  |
| Mustard greens, cooked                   | 1 cup        | 104                  |
| Kale, boiled                             | 1 cup        | 94                   |
| Broccoli, boiled                         | 1 cup        | 62                   |
| Figs, dried                              | 2 figs       | 62                   |
| Parmesan cheese, grated                  | 1 tbsp       | 55                   |

1. US Department of Agriculture, USDA national nutrient database for standard reference, release 24. <http://www.ars.usda.gov/nutrientdata>. Accessed June 18, 2012.

2. Calcium content of other breakfast cereals varies, *Total Whole Grain* cereal (General Mills) contains 1000 mg of calcium per ¾ cup serving.

**Table 2. Vitamin D Content of Some Foods<sup>1</sup>**

| Food                    | Serving Size | Vitamin D Content (IU) |
|-------------------------|--------------|------------------------|
| Salmon, sockeye, cooked | 3 oz         | 447                    |
| Halibut, cooked         | 3 oz         | 196                    |
| Sardines, canned        | 3 oz         | 164                    |
| Tuna, light canned      | 3 oz         | 154                    |
| Milk, whole (fortified) | 8 oz         | 124                    |
| Milk, skim (fortified)  | 8 oz         | 115                    |
| Herring, pickled        | 3 oz         | 96                     |
| Egg, whole extra large  | 1            | 44                     |

1. US Department of Agriculture, National nutrient database for standard reference, release 24. <http://www.ars.usda.gov/nutrientdata>. Accessed June 18, 2012. Breakfast cereals, margarine and many other products are often fortified with vitamin D.

1. Drugs for postmenopausal osteoporosis. *Treat Guidel Med Lett* 2011; 9:67.

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