

**MONTHLY NUTRITION HIGHLIGHTS**

**About Calcium and Calcium Deficiency**

**What does calcium do?**

Calcium is very important for the health of your teeth and bones.

**What happens if I don't have enough calcium?**

Most people are not aware of how they feel when they don't have enough calcium. Calcium is so important for keeping your heart beating and your brain going that when we don't have enough in our diets, the body takes it from our bones. This is just like taking money out of the ATM without checking the balance - you may not know until it is gone. For this reason, sometimes the very first symptom of calcium deficiency is an unexpected fracture or loss of a tooth.

If calcium deficiency is very severe or acute there can be muscle spasm or cramping, tingling, or burning sensation around the mouth and fingers, facial spasms and tics, seizures, and tremors.

The loss of calcium from bone is called osteopenia when it is mild and osteoporosis when it is severe. If calcium deficiency continues over a long period of time you have permanent loss of bone that can result in fragility, broken bones, loss of mobility and more. Studies have shown that weight loss surgery patients have a much higher fracture risk than the general population.

**What are other symptoms?**

Some other symptoms of calcium deficiency include:

- Difficulty swallowing
- Anxiety, irritability
- Intestinal cramping
- Spinal Pain
- Loss of height
- Brittle nails and hair
- Faintness
- Low blood pressure
- Hip pain
- Compression fracture
- Spasms of the lungs

**Where can I get calcium?**

The very best sources of calcium in food are dairy products such as milk, yogurt and cheese. There is also calcium in fortified soy and rice drinks, fortified juice, and fish where you eat the bones (like sardines). While some vegetables like leafy greens have calcium in them, this form of calcium is not well absorbed by people. Calcium is also found in dietary supplements such as liquids, powders, tablets, capsules, and soft chews. Most weight loss surgery patients are asked to take a calcium supplement. Depending on your procedure you may be asked to take a specific form of calcium like calcium citrate.

**Other important considerations**

Because you can't usually feel calcium deficiency, many people do not know when they are not getting enough. Your doctor may ask you to have a bone density test to look at how much calcium you have in bone, or ask specific questions about your diet to learn how much calcium you typically eat. If you have low calcium or loss of bone, it is important that you follow up with your doctor for lab tests and other recommended care.



**Bariatric Advantage® Calcium**

*(Chewable Tablets, Crystals and Chewy Bites)*

Bariatric Advantage offers a wide selection of calcium products to meet the needs of bariatric surgery patients.

**Calcium Citrate Chewable Tablets**  
(Cherry, Chocolate, Cinnamon and Mint)  
One Tablet Contains

Calcium from Citrate	500 mg
Vitamin D3	300 IU
Magnesium	50 mg
Vitamin K	20 mcg

**Calcium Citrate Chewy Bites**  
(Chocolate, Lemon)  
One Chew Contains

Calcium from Citrate	250 mg
Vitamin D3	125 IU

**Calcium Crystals**  
(Unflavored)  
One Serving Contains

Calcium from Lactate-Gluconate	600 mg
Vitamin D3	500 IU

