



# HEALTH AWARENESS

## Clearing The Calcium Confusion

by Miriam Nelson, Ph.D.

(NAPSA)—Recent news reports about taking calcium may have confused women, but it is important to go beyond the headlines for your health care. Two recent studies confirmed that women who consistently took calcium and vitamin D reduced their risk for fractures, reinforcing the importance of optimal daily calcium intake.



**Dr. Nelson**

It is recommended that adults over the age of 19 should consume between 1,000 and 1,200 milligrams (mg) of calcium each day. While peak bone mineral density (BMD) in women is reached around age 30, it is extremely important for women of all ages to make sure they are getting their recommended daily allowance (RDA) of calcium and vitamin D. During pregnancy and through menopause, women's calcium needs increase and lifelong supplementation is beneficial to overall health. Additionally, bone-building exercises are a key component in building and maintaining bone health and preventing harmful bone-deteriorating diseases, such as osteoporosis.

**Q: There has been a lot of talk about calcium—is it still good for me?**

Yes! Calcium is an essential nutrient to the basic functions of the body. Not only is calcium a key component of bone development, but it is needed for the heart, muscles and nerves to work properly and for blood to clot. Everyone needs calcium but as many as 75 percent of women don't get the RDA in their diet, although they could through a combination of food and supplements.

**Q: Should I do any specific exercises to help my bones?**

Weight-bearing workouts and resistance training are two different types of exercises shown to improve bone health and they are explained in my updated book, "Strong Women, Strong Bones." Jogging, stair climbing and sports such as tennis are weight-bearing activities and weight lifting or strength training are resistance exercises. Most recently, a study from the University of Arizona found that women who did a specific routine of six weight-bearing exercises and took Citracal® calcium citrate supplements gained 1 to 2 percent of their BMD, even though women typically lose 1 to 2 percent per year at that age. A healthy diet and lifestyle that includes weight-bearing exercises are the first defense against osteoporosis. Videos and explanations of the exercises can be viewed at [www.citracal.com](http://www.citracal.com) and [www.standstrong.com](http://www.standstrong.com).

**Q: I want to get my calcium. How do I pick the right supplement for me?**

Making a commitment to get optimal calcium is one of the easiest and best health moves you can make and it is even better when you pair good bone nutrition with exercise. Calcium citrate, the type of supplement used in the University of Arizona study, can be taken with or without food. This type of calcium has unsurpassed absorption even when taken with acid-reducing products and it has not been shown to increase the risk of kidney stones. All important things to consider when selecting your calcium supplement.

*Dr. Nelson is the author of the "Strong Women" book series. Her book "Strong Women, Strong Bones" has been updated and rereleased in April 2006. Dr. Nelson is a consultant to Mission Pharmacal Company. Citracal® is a product of the Mission Pharmacal Company.*