



# Women's Mid-Life Health Centre of Saskatchewan

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## Health Issues



### Tips for Taking Calcium Supplements

Keep in mind that calcium supplements may interfere with some of the prescription medications which you may be taking. Be sure to talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist about any possible interactions with your medication.

- Calcium supplements should not be taken with iron supplements or iron-rich meals; calcium can interfere with iron absorption.
- Calcium supplements can also reduce the absorption of antibiotics such as tetracycline.
- Interaction can occur between your thyroid medication and calcium supplements; it is best to wait four hours between medications.
- Calcium carbonate is best absorbed when there is food in the stomach; take calcium supplements with food or after a meal. Calcium citrate, calcium lactate, and calcium gluconate are well absorbed at anytime.
- Medications which need to be taken on an empty stomach should not be taken at the same time as a calcium supplement.
- The body can only absorb 500 mg of elemental calcium at a time; be sure that your supplement does not exceed this amount per dose. Elemental calcium tells you how much calcium is in the product.
- Elemental calcium dose is often identified in brackets on a product description label (ex: calcium carbonate 1250 mg; (500 mg of elemental calcium)).
- Take calcium with plenty of water!
- Antacids can be used as a source of calcium. These products contain calcium carbonate; which is best taken with a meal to promote absorption. Common types include: Tums, Rolaids, or Maalox tablets.

For helpful suggestions on what to look for when choosing a calcium supplement please refer to [www.osteoporosis.ca](http://www.osteoporosis.ca) (located under the 'calcium' section of the left hand menu),

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