

Is Calcium Citrate better than Calcium Carbonate?

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Is Calcium Citrate better than Calcium Carbonate? Calcium Citrate is acidic based and Calcium Carbonate is alkaline based. Choosing the right calcium supplement really depends what your needs are!

Before we discuss which one is better, we must first understand the most important factor when purchasing calcium supplements. When purchasing calcium supplements, be sure to look for the elemental calcium content, not the total content. For instance, a supplement containing 500mg of Calcium Carbonate provides 200mg of elemental calcium. Hence this pill in this example only provides 200mg of calcium, not 500mg.

Calcium Citrate e.g. Citracal or Solgar:

- **Absorption:** Calcium is best absorbed in an acidic environment, hence calcium citrate is the best absorbed supplemental form of calcium. It does not require extra stomach acid for absorption, hence we may take it anytime in a day, even on an empty stomach.
- **Calcium content:** Calcium Citrate usually provides less elemental calcium per pill than Calcium Carbonate, therefore one may need to take a relatively more numbers of pills per day to meet the needs.
- **Pill Size:** Calcium Citrate is usually small in capsule form.
- If you suffer from **acid stomach**, it is best to avoid Calcium Citrate.

Calcium Carbonate e.g. Tums or Caltrate

- **Absorption:** Calcium Carbonate is alkaline based, it requires extra stomach acid for better absorption, hence it is best taken right after meals or with a glass of acidic juice such as orange juice.
- **Calcium Content:** Calcium Carbonate is the most prevalent calcium supplements in the market . It provides more elemental calcium than Calcium Citrate hence you may not need take as many pills.
- **Pill Size:** Calcium Carbonate usually comes in a bigger tablet, some people may find it harder to swallow.

Other Types of Calcium Supplements

- One important factor affecting calcium absorption is how well the supplement dissolves. Try buying calcium supplements of US Pharmacopeia's standards. The "USP" on the label indicates that the calcium supplement meets the USP standards of supplying adequate elemental calcium and how well it dissolves in our intestines.
- Dolomite, Bone Meal or Oyster Shell: These naturally occurring calcium supplements may contain heavy metal or

lead. At the moment, calcium supplements are not tested by any regulatory agency for lead content. Therefore, it's best to avoid.

- Calcium Gluconate and Calcium Lactate: These types of calcium supplements contain low content of elemental calcium. Hence, one may need to take a large amount of tablets to meet the calcium requirement!
- Coral Calcium: This type of calcium is marketed for more than bone health. Its infomercial claimed that it can cure 200 human diseases. It's indeed only Calcium Carbonate. Read **Coral Calcium Scam Alert!**

The Dietary Reference Intake DRI for calcium for adults is 1000mg -1300mg depending on age and gender. As one serving of dairy product provides ~300mg of calcium, those who do not consume enough calcium from food sources may need calcium supplements to meet the daily requirement.

Warning: do not consume more than 2500mg of elemental calcium daily.