

# Calcium Supplements in the Diet for Galactosaemia

## Why do I need a calcium supplement?

Calcium is necessary throughout our lifetime, especially during phases of growth to encourage healthy bones and teeth. Calcium in the diet for a person with



Galactosaemia is mainly found in calcium-enriched soya milk, cheese (see list of suitable cheeses available from dietitian), tinned fish with bones (such as sardines, tuna, salmon, and pilchards), tofu, eggs, calcium-enriched white bread, baked beans, broccoli, dark green leafy vegetables (such as cabbage, kale and spinach), nuts and seeds. Even if you do choose these foods regularly,

sometimes the diet may still be lacking in calcium, as the body's requirements for calcium can be quite high, particularly in growing children and teenagers. A calcium supplement taken **daily** can help reach these calcium requirements.

## What is the best way to take my calcium supplement?

There are many factors that may positively or negatively influence the absorption of your calcium supplement. Below is a list of guidelines to ensure **maximum** calcium absorption:

- If you have been prescribed two calcium tablets per day, it is better to take one tablet in the morning and the other in the evening/night time.
- If you have been prescribed one calcium tablet per day it is probably better to take it at bedtime/evening as this may prevent bone loss that occurs at night.
- **Do not take calcium supplements at the same time as a multivitamin tablet** with iron or with an iron-only supplement because the two minerals can interfere with each other, resulting in a lower absorption.



- It is advisable to take calcium supplements after a meal, except when the meal contains the main source of iron (red meat such as beef, lamb or pork) for the day as calcium can impair the absorption of iron.
- Excessive smoking, excessive alcohol intake, excessive salt intake and excessive caffeine (caffeine is found in tea, coffee, fizzy drinks and chocolate) intake can decrease absorption of calcium supplements.
- Vitamin D can enhance the absorption of calcium. Sources of vitamin D include sunlight, oily fish, (such as salmon, herring, trout, sardines, mackerel, fresh tuna etc.) suitable vitamin D-supplemented margarine and cod liver oil.
- Vitamin D is frequently prescribed with calcium. Check with your doctor/dietitian if you need this.
- Do **not** discontinue taking your calcium supplement unless advised by your dietitian/doctor from the Metabolic Unit.



The Calcium Supplement you have been prescribed is:

This needs to be taken \_\_\_\_\_ per day.



If you are experiencing difficulties in taking the calcium supplement, please contact your dietitian in the Metabolic Unit on (01)8784317 between 9:00a.m and 5:00p.m, Monday to Friday or email [metabolic.dietitians@cuh.ie](mailto:metabolic.dietitians@cuh.ie).

It may be possible to prescribe an alternative calcium supplement for you.