

# Reducing the risk of Pre-Eclampsia

By taking Aspirin and increasing Calcium intake in pregnancy



Barwon  
Health

There is evidence that suggests that regular low-dose Aspirin as well as increased calcium intake in pregnancy may help to prevent pre-eclampsia in women who are at an increased risk. Pre-eclampsia is the most common, serious disorder of pregnancy. Pre-eclampsia can cause problems for both the woman and her unborn babies during pregnancy. These problems include:

- High blood pressure
- Leakage of protein into the urine (proteinuria)
- Thinning of the blood (coagulopathy) and liver dysfunction
- Slowing of the baby's growth

Both low dose Aspirin and increased calcium intake are safe in pregnancy.

## Risk Factors for pre-eclampsia

You are more likely to develop pre-eclampsia than other pregnant women if you have more than one of the following risk factors:

- This is your first pregnancy
- You are aged over 40 years
- Your last pregnancy was more than 10 years ago
- You are overweight
- You have a family history of pre-eclampsia
- You are carrying more than one baby.

Your risk of pre-eclampsia is also greater if any of the following apply to you:

- You had high blood pressure before you became pregnant (chronic high blood pressure or hypertension)
- You had high blood pressure during a previous pregnancy
- You have chronic kidney disease, diabetes, or an inflammatory disease that affects the immune system (such as Lupus).

## Considerations when taking Aspirin

- Aspirin should not be taken without consultation with your specialist
- Dose is usually 100-150mg per day, taken at night time.
- Aspirin is available over the counter at the pharmacy. There are many strengths and types of Aspirin, check with your pharmacist, doctor or midwife if you have any questions.
- Aspirin treatment should commence in early pregnancy, at around 16 weeks. In most cases, you will be advised to stop taking Aspirin at 37 weeks into the pregnancy.
- Side effects can include heartburn & reflux. Women with pre-existing asthma diagnosis may find Aspirin triggers their asthma. Be cautious if you have low platelets or have a history of bleeding disorders.
- There is no increased risk of bleeding at the time of delivery and aspirin does not increase your risk of an epidural.

## Considerations when increasing calcium intake



# Reducing the risk of Pre-Eclampsia

By taking Aspirin and increasing Calcium intake in pregnancy



Barwon  
Health

- Always inform your specialist maternity care provider of any other medications you may be taking (including pregnancy multi vitamins) as these may affect calcium absorption.
- Increasing calcium intake is recommended firstly with dietary changes. See calcium rich food list below.
- When increasing calcium intake in diet cannot be met, you may be prescribed a calcium supplement from 20 weeks into your pregnancy at a dose of 1.5g per day

## Guide to Calcium Content in Food

Below is a list of the calcium content of commonly eaten foods. Servings sizes are based on average portions and calcium content is approximate or an average of a variety of commercial products.

### Top Three Calcium Rich Foods

	Calcium per serve (mg)	Serve size	kJ per serve
Milk, reduced fat, calcium fortified	520	1 cup (250 ml)	382
Tofu - firm	400	½ cup (125g)	664
Regular natural yoghurt	390	Tub (200g)	740

### Milk and alternatives

	Calcium per serve (mg)	Serve size	kJ per serve
Reduced fat milk	367	1 cup (250 ml)	551
Reduced fat soy milk	367	1 cup (250 ml)	490
Skim milk	341	1 cup (250 ml)	382
Regular soy milk	309	1 cup (250 ml)	660
Regular milk	304	1 cup (250 ml)	762
Almond milk - fortified	300	1 cup (250 ml)	250
Rice milk- fortified	290	1 cup (250 ml)	600
Coconut water	30	1 cup (250 ml)	238
Almond milk – unfortified, home made	7	1 cup (250 ml)	438

### Cheese and other dairy foods

	Calcium per serve (mg)	Serve size	kJ per serve
Low fat vanilla yoghurt	350	Tub (200g)	770
Mozzarella	224	¼ cup (37g)	485
Reduced fat cheddar cheese (15%)	209	1 slice (21g)	233
Cheddar Cheese	160	1 slice (21g)	349
Cottage cheese – low fat	132	½ cup (120g)	462
Vanilla custard – reduced fat	130	1 tub (100g)	359
Shaved Parmesan	97	2 teaspoon (10g)	169
Vanilla Ice-cream – reduced fat	48	1 scoop (50g)	176
Cream Cheese	16	1 tablespoon (20g)	294

### Fish and eggs

	Calcium per serve (mg)	Serve size	kJ per serve
Pink salmon - canned in water no added salt	279	Small can (90g)	552
Sardines – canned in oil drained	267	1 can (106g)	637
Sardines – canned in spring water	253	1 can (106g)	562
Pink Salmon – canned in brine	183	Small can (90g)	575
Red Salmon - canned in brine	175	Small can (90g)	688
Mussels – steamed or boiled	173	2/3 cup (100g)	503



# Reducing the risk of Pre-Eclampsia

By taking Aspirin and increasing Calcium intake in pregnancy



Barwon  
Health

Snapper – grilled with olive oil	163	1 fillet (100g)	635
Prawns/Shrimp – peeled, cooked	70	1 cup (100g)	320
Prawns/Shrimp – shell on, cooked	59	100g (approx. 10)	83
Boiled Egg	21	1 x medium (55g)	321
Tuna – in brine drained	7	Small can (100g)	497
Seaweed (Nori) – dried	7	1 x sheet (2g)	42

## Fruit and Vegetables

Calcium per serve (mg)    Serve size    kJ per serve

Dried figs	160	6 figs (80g)	866
Kale	100	1 cup loosely packed (67g)	139
Silverbeet - boiled	87	½ cup (100g)	82
Bok Choy - raw	74	1 cup shredded (70g)	56
Watercress - raw	68	1 punnet (80g)	88
Lebanese cucumber - raw	68	1 cup sliced (120g)	61
Carrot - raw	42	1 medium (140g)	185
Orange	40	1 medium (230g)	285
Dried apricots	32	6 apricots (45g)	399
Celery - raw	31	1 cup, chopped (70g)	45
Savoy Cabbage - raw	27	1 cup –shredded (70g)	63
Spinach - raw	20	1 cup (35g)	35
Rocket - raw	16	½ cup (10g)	8
Broccoli - raw	15	2 florets (45g)	56

## Legumes, nuts and seeds

Calcium per serve (mg)    Serve size    kJ per serve

Tofu-organic, firm	114	1/3 packet (100g)	545
Chickpeas- canned	90	1 cup (200g)	892
Almonds with skin	89	10 nuts (12g)	300
Tahini	66	1 tablespoon (20g)	543
Brazil nuts	53	10 nuts (35g)	1010
Falafel – fried	51	4 balls (75g)	734
Baked Beans in tomato sauce	43	1 cup (120g)	426
Lentils – boiled, drained	33	1 cup (198g)	640
Yellow/Green split peas, soaked, boiled	13	½ cup (100g)	273

If you have any questions about taking aspirin or increasing your calcium intake, please speak to your midwife or doctor.

This document was developed by [Maternity Services](#), Barwon Health.

