

Calcium Citrate

Your body can best absorb calcium in an acidic environment, and because calcium citrate is an acidic molecule, it doesn't need stomach acids for easy absorption. Registered Dietician Gloria Tsang advises that if you have low levels of stomach acid, your body will more easily break down and use calcium from calcium citrate. However, this supplement form typically contains less elemental calcium per pill than calcium carbonate, and so you may need to take an increased dose. Additionally, if you suffer from excess stomach acid, calcium citrate can worsen your symptoms.

Calcium Carbonate

Likely, you likely have a bottle of calcium carbonate in your cupboard; this form of calcium is found in many common brands of anti-acid tablets. Unlike calcium citrate, calcium carbonate is alkaline and requires extra stomach acid to digest and absorb it. Tsang recommends that you take it immediately after a meal or with a glass of orange juice. Remember that calcium carbonate gives you more elemental calcium per pill than calcium citrate, and so you may not need to take more than one pill or tablet at a time.