

## Denver Center for Endocrine Surgery

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# CALCIUM SUPPLEMENTS AFTER THYROID OR PARATHYROID SURGERY

Calcium is a mineral found in foods that are important for healthy bones, teeth, and salt balance. You may be asked to take extra calcium after your surgery. There are many different brands available, but three main types:

- Calcium Carbonate (Tums, OsCal, Caltrate)
- Calcium Citrate (Citracal)
- Calcium phosphate (Posture D)

Low calcium is common after thyroid or parathyroid surgery. ***You may be asked to purchase a calcium supplement PRIOR to your surgery and bring it with you to the hospital on the day of surgery.***

***\*\*TUMS is preferred.***

### Symptoms of Low Calcium:

- Tingling or numbness around the mouth/nose.
- Tingling or numbness in the fingertips/toes.
- Muscle cramps, spasms, or twitching.

If have symptoms of low calcium, TAKE TWO EXTRA DOSES OF YOUR CALCIUM.  
If your symptoms do not go away within 30 minutes, you should contact your doctor.

*If you have low calcium after surgery:* You may be prescribed additional medications such as:

- Rocaltrol (Calcitriol) - is an activated form of Vitamin D, which helps with absorption of calcium. Vitamin D must be activated by the parathyroids to work, so other forms of Vitamin D do not work if the parathyroids are not working. THERE IS NO OVER-THE-COUNTER SUBSTITUTE FOR CALCITRIOL.
- Hydrochlorothiazide (HCTZ) - is a diuretic (“water pill”) medication that affects how the kidneys process calcium.
- Calcium acetate (PhosLo) - is a salt that binds calcium and helps balance the phosphate and calcium levels.

**IF YOU ARE GIVEN PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS FOR LOW CALCIUM, IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO FILL AND TAKE THESE MEDICATIONS EXACTLY AS DIRECTED.**