



# BONE HEALTH FOR ADULTS

What can I do for my Bones?

## Steps for good Bone Health

Get enough calcium and vitamin D...eat a well balanced diet

Do weight-bearing and resistance exercises

Don't smoke

Drink alcohol in moderation

Talk with your doctor

## Calcium and Vitamin D

Calcium, a critical nutrient, provides the material for building new bone. The body does not produce calcium; it must be absorbed through food.

## What are good sources of calcium?

- Dairy products – *low fat or nonfat milk, cheese, and yogurt*
  - Calcium in low fat or fat free products are easier for the body to absorb and use.
- Dark green leafy vegetables – *bok choy and broccoli*
- Calcium fortified foods – *orange juice, cereal, bread, soy, and tofu products*
- Nuts – *almonds*

If you are lactose intolerant, try eating lactose free dairy products or those with added lactase.

If you don't get enough calcium from food, consider taking a multivitamin or a calcium supplement.

## You need vitamin D to absorb calcium.

Vitamin D, a fat-soluble vitamin, is naturally present in very few foods, added to others, such as milk, and available as a dietary supplement. It is also known to boost our body's natural immune defence systems and helps to reduce inflammation.

Over →

## Recommended Calcium and Vitamin D Intake\*

### Calcium

Adults under age 50 need 1,000 mg of calcium daily, and adults age 50 and over need 1,200 mg of calcium daily.

### Vitamin D

Adults under age 50 need 400-800 IU of vitamin D<sub>3</sub> daily, and adults age 50 and older need 800 – 1,000 IU of vitamin D<sub>3</sub> daily.

\*National Osteoporosis Foundation recommendation found at [http://nof.org/prevention/calcium\\_and\\_VitaminD.htm](http://nof.org/prevention/calcium_and_VitaminD.htm)

## Weight-bearing and resistance exercises

Regular activity has many positive health benefits. Weight-bearing physical activities cause muscles and bones to work against gravity, thereby adding resistance.

### Examples of weight-bearing and resistance exercises

- Fast walking, jogging or running
- Tennis, racquetball, field hockey or soccer
- Stair climbing
- Dancing
- Jumping rope
- Basketball
- Hiking
- Weight lifting or using weight machines

## Smoking weakens bones

Smoking is bad for your bones for many reasons:

- The nicotine and other chemicals are toxic to bone cells.
- It makes it harder for you to absorb calcium.
- It lowers estrogen levels in women, a natural bone protector.
- Smoking makes exercise harder.

## Drinking alcohol weakens bones

Heavy drinking reduces bone formation. It might also affect your body's calcium supply. Drinking alcohol can also make you more likely to fall which is how many people break bones.

## Partner with your doctor

Discuss a strategy with your doctor for protecting your bones. If he/she recommends treatment with medications, follow his instructions and don't stop without discussing your concerns. Remember, these medications are an important step in reducing your risk of future bone fractures.

Additional information: National Osteoporosis Foundation @ [www.nof.org](http://www.nof.org)  
National Institutes of Health @ [www.niams.nih.gov/bone](http://www.niams.nih.gov/bone)