



Bone Health & Nutrition

Many factors contribute to the health of our bones, including gender, race, age, and nutrition. **Osteoporosis** is a condition characterized by weakened and fragile bones, increasing the risk for fractures. Good nutrition can help prevent osteoporosis, including plenty of **calcium and vitamin D**. Most people need about 1,000 mg of calcium a day, or about 3-4 servings of dairy, including:

- **Milk** (whole, skim, soy, and almond)
- **Cottage Cheese**
- **Yogurt**

Foods with lower levels of calcium include:

- Dark greens (e.g., kale and collards)
- Salmon
- Almonds
- Fortified cereals



The body produces vitamin D when exposed to the sun; however reliance on this is not recommended as many people do not get enough sun exposure to produce 100% of their vitamin D needs. Foods rich in vitamin D include:

- Fortified cereals
- Milk
- Fortified juice
- Egg yolks
- Cod liver oil
- Fatty fish (salmon and mackerel)

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It is very important to consume a variety of foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean meats, as these different foods have additional nutrients to improve bone health:

- **Vitamin K:** Green leafy vegetables (e.g., spinach, kale, Swiss chard, turnip greens, collards, mustard greens, romaine, and parsley).
- **Vitamin C:** Oranges and orange juice, grapefruit, red peppers, broccoli, kiwis, strawberries, and other fruits and vegetables.
- **Magnesium:** Nuts (e.g., almonds and cashews), cooked spinach, raisin bran cereal, brown rice, peanut butter, and baked potatoes (with skin).
- **Protein:** Both animal sources (e.g., meat, fish, eggs, and milk) and non-animal sources (e.g., beans, lentils, nuts, and seeds).
- **Zinc:** Lean beef, breakfast cereal, cashews, Swiss cheese, and milk.

Regular **exercise** can also help to further strengthen bones, especially weight bearing exercise. Weight bearing exercise is activity that forces your bones and muscles to work against gravity. Different types of weight bearing exercises include brisk walking, jogging, hiking, soccer, basketball, dancing, tennis, skiing, bowling, and weight training (using free weights or machines).

See a doctor or dietitian for your specific nutrition needs.

Additional Notes:

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