

vitaMin

Vital health information in a minute!

Celebrate Women's Health in May
It's a great time to make an appointment
for your checkup!



Strong bones matter

Strong bones provide structure to your body: they protect your organs, hold muscles in place and store calcium. That's why it is important to do weight-bearing exercise, eat a diet with lots of calcium and Vitamin D, and do not smoke. These simple steps will help keep bones strong and may reduce your risk of osteoporosis.

What's the deal with bone mass?

- By the age of 20, the average woman has acquired most of her skeletal mass.
- A large decline in bone mass occurs in older adults, which increases the risk of osteoporosis. For women, this occurs around menopause.
- It is especially important for young girls to attain peak bone mass so that they can maintain bone health throughout life.

Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is a disease in which the bones become weak and can break more easily – typically in the wrist, hip and spine as you grow older.

Be aware: If you are an older Caucasian female who does not exercise and your diet is low in calcium, your risk of osteoporosis is increased.

What's the deal with calcium?

Your body needs calcium for healthy bones and teeth, and proper function of your heart, muscles and nerves. Your body cannot produce its own calcium – it must be absorbed through food. Most people do not get enough calcium through diet alone: you need to eat three to four servings a day of foods high in calcium to get the recommended daily amount.

The best source of calcium is milk fortified with vitamin D: four glasses a day provide about 1,200 mg. of calcium.

Other good sources of calcium include:

- Dairy products like cheese and yogurt
- Dark green leafy vegetables like kale, spinach and broccoli
- Calcium fortified foods like orange juice, cereal, bread, soy beverages and tofu products
- Nuts like almonds and walnuts

Vitamin D is also important for healthy bone development and helps your body to absorb calcium (that's why milk is fortified with vitamin D). It's best to take your vitamin D at the same time as your calcium.

Supplements?

Most Americans get only half the calcium they need from their diet and need to take a calcium supplement. Check with your doctor about calcium supplements and ask about the best kind to take. Many calcium supplements also include vitamin D, so check the labels.

Weight-bearing exercise

Regular exercise helps build strong bones and is especially important early in life when you are building peak bone mass.

Encourage your family to be active in sports of some kind. Good weight-bearing exercises include walking, jogging or running, strength training, playing tennis, jumping rope, dancing and team sports like soccer, basketball and field hockey.

How much activity?

Adults: At least 30 minutes of physical activity four to five days a week.

Children: At least 60 minutes of physical activity five to six days a week.



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