

# Healthy Eating to Prevent Osteoporosis

## Eat Healthy Foods Every Day

Healthy eating is important for building strong bones. Calcium and vitamin D are the most important nutrients to prevent osteoporosis. Food is the best source of these nutrients. Avoid excess alcohol.

### Eat more high-quality foods:

- Vegetables and fruits
- Whole grains, legumes, nuts and foods high in fiber
- Fish and lean meat, like turkey or chicken

### Eat fewer low-quality foods:

- Red meat, hamburgers, hot dogs, sausage and bacon
- Fast food, ultra-processed foods, prepackaged food, and junk food
- Added sugars, refined carbohydrates, salt and saturated fat

## Calcium

Calcium is an important mineral for your body. It is used by blood vessels, muscles, hormones, enzymes and nerves. It is also used to build bones and teeth. If your body doesn't get enough calcium, it will take it from your bones, making them weak. Your body can't make calcium, so you need to get enough from the foods you eat. The recommended daily intake of calcium is 1200mg.

### Foods High in Calcium:

- Dairy products: milk, yogurt, cheese
- Salmon and sardines (canned with bones)
- Dark green, leafy vegetables, such as kale, collard greens, turnip greens, and spinach
- Almonds (or almond butter), sesame and sunflower seeds
- Tofu and soybeans
- Beans and legumes
- Calcium-fortified foods, such as cereal and orange juice

## Vitamin D

Vitamin D is necessary for your body to absorb calcium. Your body makes vitamin D when your skin is exposed to sunlight. Ten to 15 minutes of sun exposure on your face and arms three times a week during the summer is generally enough. If you are exercising outside and your

skin is exposed to sunlight, you're getting vitamin D. (NOTE: Too much sun exposure may contribute to skin cancer.)

Getting enough vitamin D from the sun might be hard. Sun exposure depends on the time of year, where you live and the pigment in your skin. You may need to get vitamin D from food, specifically D3. The recommended daily intake of vitamin D is 800 IU - 1,000 IU. This may vary based on your bloodwork results.

#### **Foods High in Vitamin D:**

- Fatty fish, such as salmon, mackerel, trout, tuna and sardines
- Fortified foods, such as milk and cereal

## **Protein**

Your body uses protein to build muscle. Muscles support your bones and help you stay balanced, reducing your risk of falling. The daily recommended intake of protein is 50g.

#### **Foods High in Protein:**

- Dairy products: milk, cheese, cottage cheese, yogurt
- Meat: chicken, pork tenderloin
- Fish and canned tuna fish
- Eggs
- Nuts and seeds
- Beans and lentils

If you have difficulty getting enough calcium and vitamin D through your diet, you may need to take supplements. Talk with your physician or send a message through MyChart.