

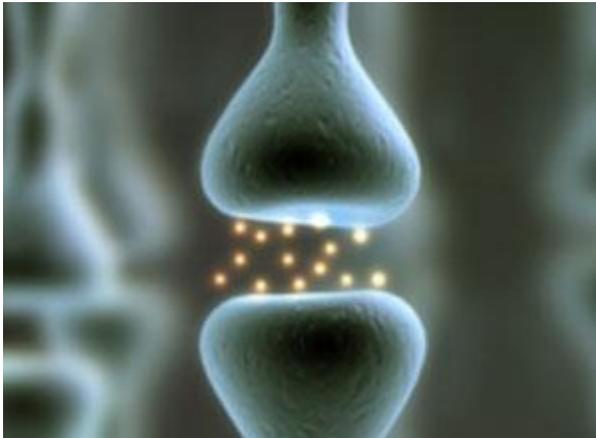
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Eat Smart and Stay Active to Combat Osteoporosis

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Osteoporosis is often called a “silent” disease because people cannot feel their bones getting weaker. It’s estimated that nearly 10 million Americans have osteoporosis and almost 34 million more have low bone density, putting them at increased risk for osteoporosis and broken bones. Each May the National Osteoporosis Foundation (NOF) celebrates Osteoporosis Awareness and Prevention Month. The Foundation has developed campaigns with the goal of increasing awareness of and action related to osteoporosis. There are many things you can do to make your bones stronger and keep them strong.

Check out the following tips to eat smart and stay active:

- **Calcium.** Calcium helps keep your bones strong and is used for nerve function and muscle movement. If you don’t supply enough calcium to meet the body’s needs, your body will take calcium from your bones. According to the NOF, women age 50 and under and men age 70 and under, need 1000 milligrams (mg) of calcium a day. Women age 51 and older and men age 71 and older should aim for 1200 mg daily.
- **Calcium sources.** Foods that are natural sources of calcium include dairy products, certain vegetables (collard greens, turnip greens, kale and okra), and some fish (sardines and salmon with bones). Calcium-fortified foods such as some juices, soy beverages, cereals, and breads have calcium added to them. If you are not getting enough calcium through your diet, supplements may help you meet your daily needs.
- **Lactose intolerance.** If you avoid dairy because of lactose intolerance, choose Dairy Group alternatives that are lower in lactose or lactose-free, such as hard cheeses, yogurt, lactose-free milk, or calcium-fortified soymilk or consume the enzyme lactase before consuming milk. Other strategies include starting with small portions of foods such as

milk and gradually increasing the serving size and eating dairy foods in combination with a meal or solid foods.

- **Vitamin D.** Vitamin D is needed to absorb the calcium consumed and helps with muscle performance and balance. Without enough vitamin D, bones can lose mass and weaken. According to the NOF, adults under age 50 need 400-800 international units (IU) of vitamin D daily. If you're 50 or older, you need 800-1000 IU.
- **Vitamin D sources.** One source of vitamin D is through exposure to sunlight. The skin makes vitamin D from the sun's ultraviolet rays. Only a few foods contain vitamin D naturally, such as salmon, tuna and mackerel and fish liver oils. Some milk, ready-to-eat breakfast cereals, orange juice and yogurt products are vitamin-D fortified. Before buying a vitamin D supplement, check the supplement labels you currently take; many already have vitamin D.
- **Staying Active.** Did you know certain forms of exercise can build bone density and slow bone loss? The NOF recommends getting 30 minutes of weight-bearing exercise on most days and strengthening exercises two to three times a week. Weight-bearing activities include dancing, walking, low-impact aerobics, and gardening. Muscle-strengthening exercises can be done with free weights, weight machines, or elastic exercise bands. Balance and posture exercises, such as tai chi or yoga, can help decrease the risk of falls and broken bones.

Approximately 1 in 2 women, and up to 1 in 4 men, over age 50 will have an osteoporosis related fracture in their lifetime. And, although many consider osteoporosis to be an older person's disease, it can strike at any age. Check out [Know My Bones](#), and the [National Osteoporosis Foundation](#) for information on understanding osteoporosis, keeping your bones strong, and bone health resources.