

Additional Top Tips

Try to avoid:

- Lots of salt (sodium chloride) – if sodium levels are high in your body, this increases the amount of calcium the body gets rid of through urine.
- Drinking lots of fizzy drinks – flavourings used in fizzy drinks contain phosphorous; if there is too much phosphorous in your body, calcium is taken from your bones to help balance levels.
- Drinking too much caffeine (for example, found in coffee, tea, cola) – excessive amounts of caffeine may affect the calcium balance in your body.
- Losing too much weight – being underweight can increase the risk of broken bones if you fall.

Dietary Supplements

A healthy balanced diet should provide all the vitamins and minerals you need. If you are concerned, ask your Doctor or Dietitian for advice.

In Summary: Bone Boosters

Good for Bones

- Calcium
- Vitamin D
- Activity

Bad for Bones

- Smoking
- Too much alcohol
- Being underweight

If you cannot go let us know!

Every month around 2,000 people across Forth Valley fail to turn up for hospital appointments. This costs the NHS millions of pounds each year and increases waiting times. So if you are unable to attend or no longer require your hospital appointment please let us know so we can offer it to someone else.

We are happy to consider requests for this publication in other languages or formats such as large print. Please call 01324 590886 (24hrs), fax 01324 590867 or email FV-UHB.disabilitydepartment@nhs.net

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This includes corridors, doorways, car parks and any of our grounds. If you do smoke on NHS premises you may be liable to prosecution and a fine.



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NHS Forth Valley

Keeping Bones Healthy - Food Facts

Information for Patients

Introduction

The strength of your bones continues to increase until you reach the age of about 30. A gradual loss of the bone mineral calcium begins naturally at around 40 years old. This can reduce the strength of your bones.

Your bones are more likely to fracture if they are not strong, however there is lots you can do to keep your bones strong and healthy.

These include eating a balanced diet which is rich in foods high in calcium, taking weight-bearing exercise, ensuring you don't drink too much alcohol and stopping smoking as this can have a negative effect on bone strength.

Keeping Bones Healthy

The calcium stored in your bones equates to 99% of all the calcium in your body. Eating plenty of calcium-containing foods is important to help build and maintain healthy bones.

Along with foods high in calcium, vitamins and other minerals are also important so it is best to enjoy a varied diet to get a good mix of all the vitamins and minerals you need.

Calcium

Calcium is needed to keep your bones strong and rigid. A balanced diet should provide the calcium you need. Low fat dairy products, for example semi-skimmed milk, contain just as much calcium, if not more.

Foods that provide calcium:

- Dairy products,
- Green leafy vegetables e.g. spinach, broccoli,
- Bread and breakfast cereals with added calcium,
- Beans and pulses,
- Oily fish with soft bones e.g. sardines and pilchards,
- Dried fruit,
- Calcium enriched fruit juices and water.

Tips on how to include calcium in your diet:

- Breakfast cereals are an easy calcium-rich start to the day.
- Drink milky drinks instead of tea and coffee or have a milky coffee such as a latte.
- Snack on yoghurts/fromage frais or have them as a pudding.
- Try to have milky puddings e.g. custard, semolina or rice pudding.
- Include oily fish as part of a main meal or in a sandwich or on toast.
- Include a good variety of green leafy vegetables, pulses and beans in stews/soups and casseroles.
- Try different types of bread – the ones with extra seeds and nuts are the best!
- Add dried fruit to home-baking.

Vitamin D

Vitamin D is essential for the absorption of calcium. The main source of Vitamin D is through the effect of sunlight on your skin which the body uses to produce vitamin D. By getting 15-20 minutes sun exposure to the face and arms every day during the summer months, this should provide enough vitamin D to last all year. If you enjoy walking, gardening or any other outdoor activity, you are probably already getting enough sunlight. Be careful not to burn your skin.

Older people, those who don't get out much or who cover up for religious/cultural reasons can become deficient in Vitamin D. This results in a decrease in the absorption of calcium and therefore weaker bones.

Vitamin D can also be found in foods and these foods should be increased if sunlight source is limited.

Foods that provide Vitamin D:

- Oily fish: kippers, sardines, mackerel, pilchards, salmon and trout,
- Margarine, butter and low fat spreads,
- Eggs,
- Some breakfast cereals,
- Some milk products,
- Cod liver oil (avoid if pregnant).