



Keeping Your Bones Healthy

Choose low-fat milk, soy milk, and other drinks fortified with calcium and vitamin D.

- Have 3 or more servings of milk or other dairy foods daily.
- Milk is a good source of calcium and vitamin D.
- Add low-fat or powdered nonfat milk to casseroles and soups.
- Cook oatmeal or other hot cereals with low-fat milk instead of water.
- If milk doesn't agree with you, try lactose-free products. Drink half a glass at a time with a meal, or try yogurt and cheese, which can be gentler on your stomach.
- Some lactose-free drinks are Lactaid®, soy milk, and orange juice fortified with calcium and vitamin D.

Choose low-fat yogurt and other low-fat dairy products.

- If you do not drink milk, have low-fat yogurt or other low-fat dairy foods daily.
- Yogurt and cheese are good sources of calcium, but not vitamin D.
- Cottage cheese and cream cheese are poor sources of calcium and vitamin D.
- Plain yogurt has more calcium than fruit-flavored yogurt.
- Limit high-fat cheeses to no more than 1 serving per day.
- Add a small spoonful of shredded parmesan cheese to your soup, salad, or whole grain.

Avoid or cut back on soft drinks.

- Some research shows that drinking soft drinks (sodas) can weaken bones.
- Drink more water, low-fat milk, or fortified soy milk.

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Plan for ways to get enough calcium.

- Low-fat dairy products and dark green, leafy vegetables (like spinach and broccoli) are rich in calcium.
- Talk to your doctor to see if you need a calcium supplement.
- Aim for 1200 mg of calcium a day if you are over 50 years old.
- Aim for 1000 mg of calcium a day if you are between 19 and 50 years old.

Plan for ways to get enough vitamin D.

- High-fat fish is a major source of vitamin D. Salmon, Atlantic mackerel and sardines are good choices.
- Some beverages are fortified with vitamin D and calcium—low-fat milk, soy milk, and orange juice.
- If you think you are not getting enough vitamin D, see your doctor to check your kidney function and talk about whether you need a supplement.

Be physically active.

- Physical activity helps build strong bones and improves balance.
- Use a stretch band to make your muscles strong and more flexible.
- If you have osteoporosis, be careful with activities that put stress on the spine, like bending forward or twisting. Talk with your doctor before starting new activities.

Stop smoking.

- Smoking cigarettes can make your bones weak.
- For help quitting smoking, talk with your health department nurse or health educator.

Prevent falls.

- Keep stairwells and halls well-lit. Use a night light.
- Keep walking paths clear.
- Tape loose cords to the floor or wall.
- Put nonskid strips in the tub and use a handrail to get in and out.
- Put nonskid backing on rugs.
- Put heavy items on low shelves and ask for help with items out of your reach.