

Take Control of Your Bone Health

Whether you've been diagnosed with osteoporosis or are trying to reduce your chances of developing it, your food choices can significantly affect your bone strength and health.

To maintain or improve your bone health, consume more:

• **Calcium and vitamin D:** It's best to look at your diet first to increase your intake of these important nutrients since food sources are better than supplements. Talk to your physician or registered dietitian before taking any supplements, should you ultimately need to use them.

In 2010, the Institute of Medicine issued new Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs) for these two nutrients, specifying an Estimated Average Requirement (EAR) of 400 IU/day of vitamin D.

When it comes to calcium, adults between the ages of 19 and 50 have an EAR of 800 mg/day. Males between the ages of 51 and 70 have an EAR of 800 mg/day, while females require slightly more, with an EAR of 1,000 mg/day. The EAR for individuals of either sex who are older than 70 is 1,000 mg/day.

The best sources of calcium are cow's milk or fortified milk substitutes, yogurt, cheese, fortified orange juice, fortified breads, beans, almonds, and dark-green leafy vegetables.

- Calcium-fortified orange juice, 1 cup: 349 mg
- Cow's milk, 1% fat, 1 cup: 305 mg
- Fruit-variety yogurt, low fat, 6 oz: 258 mg
- Cheddar cheese, 1 oz: 204 mg
- 100% whole wheat bread fortified with calcium and vitamin D, 1 slice: 125 mg
- Pinto beans, canned, 1 cup: 113 mg
- Raw sliced almonds, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup: 62 mg
- Collards, raw, 1 cup chopped: 84 mg
- Prunes, 5 pieces: 20 mg

Vitamin D is found in cod liver oil, salmon, mackerel, tuna, milk, fortified orange juice, fortified yogurt, fortified margarine, beef liver, fortified cereal, fortified bread, egg yolks, and cheese.

- Cod liver oil, 1 T: 1,360 IU
- Atlantic mackerel, 3 oz raw: 547 IU
- Pink salmon, 3 oz raw: 370 IU
- Tuna, fresh bluefin, 3 oz raw: 193 IU
- Cow's milk with added vitamins A and D, 1% milk, 1 cup: 117 IU
- Orange juice fortified with calcium and vitamin D, 1 cup: 100 IU
- Fruit-variety yogurt, nonfat, fortified with vitamin D, 6 oz: 88 IU

- Margarine, 80% fat, stick, with added vitamin D, 1 T: 60 IU
- Beef liver, pan fried, 81-g slice: 40 IU
- Egg yolk, 1 large: 37 IU
- Cheddar cheese, 1 oz: 7 IU

• **Potassium and magnesium:** Potassium is found in many fruits and vegetables, including tomatoes, white and sweet potatoes, artichokes, avocados, beets, Brussels sprouts, parsnips, pumpkin, spinach, winter squash, oranges, bananas, melons, apricots, dates, kiwis, mangos, nectarines, prunes, raisins, and papaya. Magnesium is found in seeds, nuts, legumes, whole grains, and dark-green leafy vegetables. The serving sizes and nutrient content vary. Find more information at the USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference: <http://ndb.nal.usda.gov/>

To maintain or improve your bone health, consume less:

• **Salt:** A diet high in salt causes more calcium to be excreted in the urine. Some foods high in salt include condiments, soups, many cheeses, cereals, boxed seasoned rice and pasta sides, meal mixes, processed meats, snack foods, sauces and gravies, and canned vegetables.

• **Caffeine:** Caffeine may contribute to bone loss. Experts recommend limiting your coffee intake to three or fewer cups each day. Colas appear to be worse than other soda for your bones. Some studies show that tea, even if caffeinated, may be beneficial to bone health. However, other studies show no benefit.

• **Alcohol:** Although some research shows that alcohol may not be as bad for the bones as originally thought, no definitive recommendations exist. For now, it's best to drink no more than two alcohol beverages per day, as more than that may interfere with calcium absorption.