

Preventing Bone Loss

We form most of our bone when we are young and reach our peak bone mass. Peak bone mass is the point at which you have the greatest amount of bone you will ever have, and is usually between 18 and 25 years of age. After that, bone mass stays balanced throughout life as bones build, break down and build again until you reach midlife.

There are steps you can take at any age to prevent bone loss, or osteoporosis.

1. Throughout your life, getting enough calcium and vitamin D are important. The National Osteoporosis Foundation and National Institutes of Health recommend the following amounts, based on age:

Adult Women	Calcium (Daily)	Vitamin D (Daily)
19-49 years old	1,000 mg (milligrams)	400-800 IU (International Units)
50 years and older	1,200 mg	800-1000 IU
Adult Men	Calcium (daily)	Vitamin D (Daily)
19-49 years old	1,000 mg	400-800 IU
50-70 years old	1,000 mg	800-1000 IU
71 years and older	1,200 mg	800-1000 IU

Sources of calcium include:

- Milk, yogurt and cheese
- Certain green leafy vegetables, such as kale, bok choy and collard greens
- Fish with bones, such as canned salmon, mackerel and sardines
- Drinks that have calcium added, such as some orange juice and rice and soy drinks

Vitamin D helps your body absorb calcium, and is often added to dairy products.

If you aren't getting enough calcium or vitamin D from your diet, talk with your health care provider about supplements.

2. Exercise regularly:
 - Regular exercise can help you to keep your bones strong.
 - Weight-bearing exercise and walking or running are great choices.
 - Balance exercises are also helpful in helping prevent falls and bone breaks.

3. Make healthy lifestyle choices:
 - Avoid smoking. If you don't smoke, don't start. If you do smoke, quit.
 - Limit your alcohol. Drinking more than two drinks a day increases your risk of osteoporosis.
 - Talk to your health care provider about your bone health. He or she may recommend lifestyle changes or a bone mineral density test if you are at risk for osteoporosis.

Source:

National Osteoporosis Foundation, Calcium and Vitamin D: <https://www.nof.org/patients/treatment/calciumvitamin-d/>.

National Institutes of Health, NIH Osteoporosis and Related Bone Diseases National Resource Center, Calcium and Vitamin D: Important at Every Age: <https://www.bones.nih.gov/health-info/bone/bone-health/nutrition/calcium-and-vitamin-d-important-every-age>.

The Staywell Company, LLC. Calcium Supplements. 2020

American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons. Osteoporosis. 2019