

# 14 Tips for Healthy Bones

**Make no bones about it...they are the only ones you will have for the rest of your life!**

## Healthy Tip #1 – Choose calcium and vitamin D-rich foods.

When you are selecting foods, aim to include calcium and vitamin D-rich foods. Include these foods frequently in a well-balanced and varied diet.

## Healthy Tip #2 – Get calcium and vitamin D while at work.

Bring a container of yogurt to work or have a glass of milk (cow, fortified soy or rice) with your lunch. Encourage your employer to provide a fridge.

## Healthy Tip #3 – Eat your vegetables.

Getting enough of the mineral magnesium, and vitamin K is important to your bones. Leafy green vegetables (for example, Swiss chard, spinach, artichokes) are rich in magnesium, as are beans, nuts and seeds (for example, soybeans, almonds, and sunflower seeds). Cooked kale, Swiss chard, spinach and broccoli are good leafy green vegetable sources of vitamin K. Nuts and seeds also supply some vitamin K.

## Healthy Tip #4 – Substitute skim milk for water in breakfast cooking.

When you make breakfast, cook your hot breakfast cereals or make your pancakes using skim milk instead of water.

## Healthy Tip #5 – Eat breakfast...it's a good way to get calcium and vitamin D.

Have a bowl of cereal with milk, or try a smoothie made with yogurt. Read the label to see that you choose a yogurt with added vitamin D.

## Healthy Tip #6 – If you drink alcohol, limit your intake.

Alcohol can reduce your ability to absorb nutrients from your diet. Be kind to your bones, and if you drink alcohol, enjoy a maximum of one drink a day.

## Healthy Tip #7 – When eating out...

When dining out at a restaurant...go for some greens with a yogurt-based dressing, have a salad with a little cheese, try a glass of milk instead of pop, or order up a latté instead of regular coffee. Be creative...these are easy ways to increase your calcium intake.

# 14 Tips for Healthy Bones

BoneHealth4Women.ca

**Make no bones about it...they are the only ones you will have for the rest of your life!**

## Healthy Tip #8 – Walk for your bones.

Grab your daughter or mother, friend, or neighbour and go for a walk, or head out on your own. Make it a longer distance than you usually walk. Or, walk your usual distance more regularly. Take a backpack and do some grocery shopping along the way. Weight-bearing activities are good for your bones!

## Healthy Tip #9 – Take time to relax and reduce the stress in your life.

If you have undue stress in your life, try some relaxing activities such as gardening or yoga. Decreased levels of stress hormones will benefit your bones. Don't worry if you forget to eat calcium and vitamin D rich foods or take your supplement, you can change this when you remember.

## Healthy Tip #10 – Get a good night's sleep.

A restless sleep or sleeping less than 6.5 to 8 hours at night can negatively affect your bones. If you are having trouble sleeping, talk to your physician about possible solutions.

## Healthy Tip #11 – Watch your calcium supplements.

Walking along the supplement aisle can be overwhelming, and you may find yourself asking, "Which one?" Read the label. Look for a maximum calcium dose of 500 mg "elemental calcium" *combined with* vitamin D. Avoid unrefined dolomite, bone meal, coral, and oyster shell sources as these may contain heavy metals, like lead. When taking your calcium and vitamin D supplements, spread out your supplement intake over the day (and when you aren't consuming calcium-containing foods), and take with plenty of fluids. When you take calcium just before bed, you will help your bones overnight!

## Healthy Tip #12 – Discuss health with your family.

Talk with your family about the importance of holistic health. If it is important to you, then it may be important to them. Create a plan to make a well balanced and calcium and vitamin D-rich meal together or join together to do regular weight-bearing activities. Start as early in life as possible and continue to take care of your bones into old age.

## Healthy Tip #13 – Talk to your physician about your bone health.

If you are uncertain about the state of your bones, discuss this aspect of your health with your physician. The sooner you take good care of your bones, the better off you will be.

## Healthy Tip #14 – Ask your dentist about your x-rays.

A dental x-ray is a useful tool for checking the health of your jaw bone and teeth, and it may be a useful indicator of your overall bone health. Your dentist is able to identify if you have low jaw bone density, and if so, visit your physician to discuss your overall bone health.