



Maintaining Healthy Bones

Throughout life, bone constantly remodels itself – in the earlier part of life the amount of bone created is greater than the amount broken down. After bone reaches its peak density and strength (around the mid 30's) the rate of break down is greater than the rate of renewal and bone density begins to decline.

Although we can't stop the fact our bone density will decline, the right diet and exercise can slow the **rate** of decline. Although diseases such as Osteoporosis are usually associated with the elderly, looking after your bones early on can prevent problems later.

Know your calcium requirements:

- Men: 19-70 yrs = 1000mg per day
- Women: 19-50 yrs = 1000mg per day; 51-70 years 1300mg per day.

Pregnancy, lactation and adolescent values differ.

Know good sources of calcium

- Trim dairy products (milk, yoghurt, cheese, ice-cream - *not too much!*). These are the best dietary sources of calcium.
- Fortified Soy drinks
- Whole almonds
- Canned sardines
- Tofu
- Vitamin D is essential for calcium absorption. Sun-exposure causes reactions in the skin, which increase the amount of active Vitamin D in the body (about 15 minutes per day is adequate).
- Regular weight bearing exercises (which force you to work against gravity) help to maintain healthy bones. These exercises include walking, jogging, tennis, dancing and weight lifting.
- Smoking has been shown to be a risk factor for decreased bone density (and an increased risk of fractures in the elderly).
- Chronic alcohol intake can interfere with the balance of calcium in the body and the protective effect of some hormones on bone.
- Excessive salt intake has been associated with increased calcium excretion from the body and this is believed to increase the risk of osteoporosis.
- Although genetics and lifestyle in the early years play a large part in your bone density, protect your boney assets NOW and keep them strong enough to carry you through life!

