

Fueling Up

FOR BONE,
JOINT AND
MUSCLE HEALTH

You can see the changes to your body on the outside but are you in tune with what's happening on the inside?

The truth is your body is working around the clock to keep you healthy. Your musculoskeletal system, which includes bones, joints, and muscles, plays a big role in your overall health. Having a healthy and strong musculoskeletal system is important at all ages. Eating well, being physically active, and reaching and keeping a healthy weight are some of the steps you can take to help keep your musculoskeletal system healthy.

Bones are formed during childhood up to about age 30. Even during the adult years your bones are constantly being remodeled; old bone is replaced with new bone. If you don't get enough calcium in your diet, this can lead to weak and brittle bones over time. The trick is to get the daily recommended amount of nutrients and to lead an active lifestyle to help increase your overall body and bone health.

Calcium and Vitamin D

Calcium is a well-known bone nutrient, but vitamin D is just as important because it helps your body absorb calcium. The body can make vitamin D from the sunlight, however, the exact amount you make from exposure to sunlight varies depending on a number of factors. This means you still need to focus on getting enough vitamin D from your diet.

When possible, it's best to get nutrients from food. Vitamin D is found naturally in fatty fish and is added to many foods like milk, plant based beverages, and margarines. If you aren't getting 600-800 IU (International Units) each day from food, you should take a vitamin D supplement.

Calcium is found naturally in some foods and is often added to foods like orange juice, yogurt, and tofu. If you aren't getting 1000-1300 mg of calcium each day from food, you should consider taking a calcium supplement.

If you need a calcium or vitamin D supplement, talk to your pharmacist to find out which one is right for you.

DAILY VITAMIN D AND CALCIUM RECOMMENDATIONS – FOOD AND SUPPLEMENTS COMBINED

Age Group	Daily Calcium Recommendations (mg/day)	Daily Vitamin D Recommendations (IU/day)
1–3 years old	700	600
4–8 years old	1000	600
9–18 years old	1300	600
19–30 years old	1000	600
31–50 years old	1000	600
51–70 year old males	1000	600
51–70 year old females	1200	600
>70 years old	1200	800
9–18 years old—pregnant/lactating	1300	600
19–50 years old—pregnant/lactating	1000	600

Institute of Medicine, 2010

For information on the calcium and vitamin D content of different foods visit the Canadian Nutrient File at <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/fiche-nutri-data/index-eng.php>

Too Much of a Good Thing...

Taking too much of just about anything can be harmful to your health. Vitamin D and calcium are no exception. To prevent negative health effects, nutrition scientists recommend adults consume no more than 4000 IU of vitamin D and no more than 2500 mg (2000 mg for people 51 years old or more) of calcium from food and supplements combined each day.

Healthy eating at all ages is important. To get the nutrients you need for a healthier musculoskeletal system eat a well-balanced diet according to *Canada's Food Guide* (Health Canada, 2007). Here are some tips to help:

1. Eat the number of recommended servings of low fat milk and alternatives. You need anywhere from two to four servings each day.
2. Eat at least two servings of fish each week. Fish contains omega-3 fats that can help reduce inflammation.
3. Boron, magnesium, vitamin K, vitamin A, copper, iron, fluoride, zinc, and manganese also help with bone and joint health. You can get these nutrients by eating a variety of foods throughout the day!

Healthy living includes: eating a well-balanced diet, being physically active, and reaching and keeping a healthy weight at all ages. You have the power to improve your diet and your quality of life. Remember, it's never too late to start making healthier choices.



If you have special dietary needs you should ask your health care provider for a referral to a Registered Dietitian.

www.workingtowardwellness.ca

BodyBalance



KEY REFERENCES

Health Canada. (2007). *Eating well with Canada's Food Guide: A resource for educators and communicators*. Ottawa, ON: Health Canada.
Institute of Medicine. (2011). *Dietary reference intake for calcium and vitamin D*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.