

BONE HEALTH

CALCIUM: HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?



Osteoporosis is prevalent in Australia with over 4 million people aged 50 years+ having either osteoporosis or poor bone health. Osteoporosis is a medical condition characterised by bones which are so weak and brittle even mild stresses can result in a fracture. To support healthy ageing we're talking bone health, and the ways to optimise bone health to reduce your risk of osteoporosis.

Know the risk factors

There's several factors which can affect your chances of developing osteoporosis, including:

➤ **Age:** osteoporosis risk increases with age due to a reduction in bone strength, particularly amongst individuals aged over 75.

➤ **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people:** 2.3% prevalence

➤ **Low vitamin D levels:** typically associated with limited sun exposure. Vitamin D importantly helps the body to absorb calcium.

➤ **Low calcium intake:** adults are advised to consume 1,000mg of calcium per day. For women over 50 and men over 70, this increases to 1,300mg.

➤ **Sex:** osteoporosis is more common in women than men, with 29% of women aged over 75 having it versus 10% of men

➤ **Medical history:** including previous fractures, early menopause in women, low testosterone in men, coeliac disease, IBD, diabetes mellitus, anorexia nervosa, chronic liver/kidney disease

➤ **Family history:** osteoporosis or fractures due to falls.

➤ **Sedentary lifestyles, smoking, excessive alcohol intake and thin body build/low weight**

How to Reduce Your Risk

Whilst we can't change some factors, including our age and family history, the good news is osteoporosis is largely preventable, such as:

- Adequate calcium intake through diet and/or supplementation
- Appropriate vitamin D levels mainly through sun exposure
- Regular weight-bearing exercise and physical activity
- Minimising alcohol intake and refraining from smoking

Risk-reducing strategies are designed to optimise bone density and minimise risk of fractures.

Did you know!
Currently 1 in 3 adults 50 years+ die within 12 months of suffering a hip fracture.





Calcium for all Ages

Whilst older adults are at an increased risk of developing osteoporosis, it's important for everybody to meet the recommended calcium intake. Meeting daily calcium requirements promotes bone health and minimises the risk of developing of osteoporosis in the future. So how can we achieve this?

Good sources of calcium include:

- Dairy products such as cheese, milk and yoghurt
- Calcium-fortified plant-based milks
- Fish with edible soft bones including canned salmon and sardines
- Dark leafy vegetables including kale and broccoli

Minimum recommended number of serves from the dairy food group		
	Age (years)	No. of serves per day
Men	19-70	2½
	70+	3½
Women	19-50	2½
	51+	4
	Pregnant or Breastfeeding	2½
Boys	2-3	1½
	4-8	2
	9-11	2½
	12-18	3½
Girls	2-3	1½
	4-8	1½
	9-11	3
	12-18	3½

Adapted from 2013 Australian Dietary Guidelines



one serve of dairy is equivalent to:



milk
1 cup
250ml

or



cheese
2 slices
40g

or



yoghurt
¾ cup
200g

or



ricotta
½ cup
120g

It's recommended more than 50% of intake from dairy foods is reduced-fat varieties

Healthy eating for everybody

Keeping Active

Maintaining an active lifestyle is a great way to encourage strong, healthy bones and reduce bone loss associated with aging, therefore reducing risk of developing osteoporosis. In particular, it is suggested to focus on exercises that build strength and balance, such as:

- Weightlifting and weight-bearing exercises
- Resistance bands
- Jogging and aerobics
- Yoga