

## **Building Strong Bones**

We hear so much each day about the need for large amounts of calcium in the diet for bone building and osteoporosis prevention. The recommendations often lump all types of calcium supplements together, making no distinction as to which forms might be best. This blanket recommendation fails to acknowledge that there are many other factors involved in building strong bones.

It is important to remember that bones are active organs consisting of several types of tissues including bone tissue, hardened minerals, bone marrow, endosteum, periosteum, cartilage, blood vessels and nerves. Bones are very important for carrying out a number of vital processes of the body. Bone marrow manufactures blood cells. Bones store and dispense minerals to help maintain the ideal pH of the body. Bones support the entire body and provide a protective framework for internal organs. The small bones in the ear conduct sound, enabling us to hear.

Because the bones are involved in so many essential processes, they are continually being replenished and renewed. Osteoclasts serve to remove damaged cells in the bones while osteoblasts serve to rebuild and repair bone material. Each of us deals with unique stresses and metabolic influences that may impact this process. Blood sugar levels and hormones are just two factors that affect the strength, health and function of the bones. Simply recommending an intake of 1000 milligrams of calcium each day doesn't come near to addressing the complex needs of the bones.

Here are some of my recommendations for building strong, healthy bones:

**1. Physical activity.** It is easy to fall into a sedentary lifestyle, especially if your work keeps you sitting at a desk all day. Bones grow stronger as demands are placed upon them. We don't have to be marathon runners to keep our bones strong, but we should look for ways to become a little more active in our daily lives. Even lifting some light weights for ten or twenty minutes while watching TV can help a lot. Parking a little farther from the office or store can add significantly to our activity level. Using the stairs instead of the escalator or walking a few blocks instead of driving may take a few minutes longer, but offers great benefits. Playing with our children in the backyard or the park will strengthen our bones and our families!

**2. Daily stretching.** It is important to keep our muscles, tendons and ligaments loose and flexible to avoid putting undue stress on the bones and joints. Massage can be a relaxing and rejuvenating way to stay supple. Chiropractic adjustments can serve to free up muscle spasms and tension that may interfere with free and natural movement. Yoga, Pilates and stretching exercises are all very effective.

**3. Include many mineral rich foods in your diet.** Bones are living tissue requiring constant nourishment. A highly processed diet will cause bone health to suffer as you age. Green vegetables and herbs are very mineral rich. It can take a bit of work to release the nutrients from these foods through adequate chewing. That is why I recommend fresh vegetable juices and green smoothies. There are many recipes and much information available on the internet. Just Google green smoothies or the raw family. If you don't always have time for smoothies, a green powder can be added to juice or water for a quick mineral boost. We carry mineral abundant Organic Barley Greens at our office.

**4. Make your own soup stocks, using good organic meats WITH the bones.** Throughout history people of all cultures have simmered bones to make their soup stocks. A mistake we too often make today is that we buy our meats for convenience - with bones removed - and thereby lose many important nutrients. Simmering a meaty soup bone or a whole chicken overnight in a crock pot will extract many valuable minerals. Simply remove the bones and add vegetables, salt and herbs for an easy delicious soup!

**5. Make sure to get enough Vitamin D.** Vitamin D is needed for calcium absorption and function. We can get much of our vitamin D by exposing our skin to the sun every day. Sunlight reacts with the cholesterol on the skin to form vitamin D. Sunscreens prevent the production of Vitamin D so it is best to find other ways to protect our skin from burning or overexposure. During the winter months or when we are not able to be outdoors much, we must supplement the diet with fish oils or an emulsified vitamin D3 supplement. The one we prefer is Bio-D Forte from Biotics. This emulsified Vitamin D is readily absorbed by most people.

**6. Eat high quality fats** including olive oil, wild caught cold water fish and fish oils, avocados, soaked nuts and seeds, organically raised eggs (especially the yolk), coconut and coconut oils and moderate amounts of organically raised chicken and beef. Fats and cholesterol are both important for absorption and production of Vitamins A & D,

**7. Eat adequate amounts of Vitamin C rich foods** such as bell peppers, tomatoes, citrus foods, broccoli, berries and many fruits, vegetables and herbs. It is important to remember that ascorbic acid is NOT Vitamin C, but only a minuscule part of the Vitamin C complex. Taking large amounts of ascorbic acid will throw your body chemistry out of balance, eventually leading to malnutrition.

**8. Avoid foods that rob your bones of calcium.** Acidifying foods place a heavy burden on the bones as they work to maintain the proper pH of the blood. Alcohol, table salt and junk foods such as soft drinks, refined sugar, cookies, cake, and candy and even artificial sweeteners are all harmful to your bones. Keep these to a minimum and avoid artificial sweeteners altogether.

Following these tips should greatly benefit your bones. In addition we carry some wonderful bone strengthening natural whole food supplements..

**Biost** and **Calcifood** are both processed from whole raw veal bone and contain materials needed for bone and spinal chord health. **Cal-Ma Plus** combines calcium lactate and parathyroid desiccate to enhance absorption of calcium. Daily bone health convenience packs contain several bone building products in handy purse packs. **Bone Complex** is an herbal product containing key phytochemicals to support healthy bone tissue density and remodeling. **Cataplex C** and **Cyruta Plus** contain essential bone strengthening Vitamin C complex and Collagen.

Remember, any small change you make today will impact your health for years to come.

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