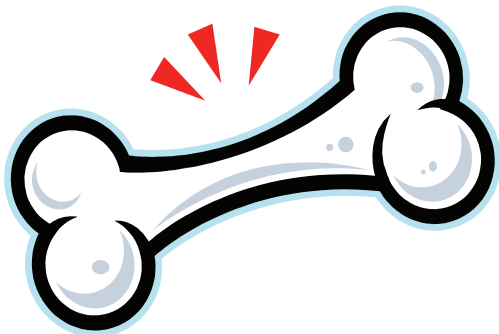


# Guide to Healthy Bones

By 2020, half of all Americans over age 50 will have weak bones unless we make changes in our diet and lifestyle. People with weak bones are at higher risk for broken bones and falling.

Americans are living longer and this means our bones need to stay strong so we can enjoy our lives and stay active.

Now is the time for you to protect your bones and take control of your bone health.



## Why are healthy bones important?

- Bones give your body shape to move and protect your organs.
- Helping your bones be healthy now will allow you to be active as you age.

## Not having healthy bones results in:

- Osteoporosis – a bone thinning disease that causes broken bones which stop you from walking or doing your favorite hobby.
- There is no cure – prevention is the key!
  - It is easier when you are young to make sure your bones are healthy than to wait until you develop weak bones.

**It is never too late to improve your bone health!**

## Ideas for eating three servings of dairy every day!

- Make oatmeal with lowfat milk and strawberries
- Dunk graham crackers into a glass of milk
- Melt cheddar cheese over canned chicken on an English muffin
- Put string cheese in your gym bag for a healthy snack
- Put slices of cheese on whole wheat crackers
- Layer granola with fresh fruit and lowfat yogurt
- Freeze squeezable yogurt for a creamy popsicle
- Drink lowfat or fat free flavored milks for on-the-go snacks
- Mix ½ cup of shredded cheddar cheese with fresh popped popcorn
- Layer lowfat cheese and smoked turkey onto whole wheat bread
- Wrap Swiss cheese and ham in a tortilla and dip in salsa
- Dip pieces of angel food cake into strawberry yogurt

Source: [www.3aday.org](http://www.3aday.org)



## What makes bones healthy?

- **Calcium** – adds to bone strength; most people do not eat enough dairy every day to keep their bones healthy
- **Vitamin D** – helps your body use and take in calcium from the foods you eat
- **Be physically active** – strengthens your muscles which help keep you from falling
- **Healthy weight** – being underweight raises your risk for broken bones
- **Age** – people older than 60 years have weaker bones and are more likely to fall
- **Women** – lack of regular periods causes weaker bones and puts you at risk for fractures
- **Talk with your doctor** about medicines you are taking some medications such as steroids can harm your bones; see your doctor if you think you may be at risk
- **Don't smoke** – smoking can cause bones to become thin and increases risk for broken bones
- **Limit alcohol use** – drinking more than three drinks a day increases your risk for broken bones and causes bones to become thin

**Bones may begin to weaken early in life. Prevent this with a healthy diet and the right kinds of physical activity.**

## What can I do to improve and keep my bones healthy?

- Eat a well-balanced diet including nonfat or lowfat dairy foods daily.
- Eat three servings of dairy foods every day. One serving of dairy is:
  - 8-oz. lowfat milk
  - 1-oz. cheese
  - 6-8-oz. yogurt
- Eat foods with vitamin D added such as lowfat milk.
- Be physically active outside in the sunshine whenever possible.
  - Aim for 30 minutes of physical activity on most days of the week.
  - Include strength training and weight bearing physical activity such as walking/running, basketball or karate.
- Visit your doctor on a regular basis.
- All women should see their doctor when menstruation stops for 3 months.



**You are never too old or too young to improve your bone health.**

The information used to develop this handout is available by calling 1-866-718-BONE or by visiting <http://surgeongeneral.gov/library/bonehealth/>

Additional resources are available at:  
[www.3aday.org](http://www.3aday.org) • [www.drink-milk.com](http://www.drink-milk.com) • [www.nationaldairycouncil.org](http://www.nationaldairycouncil.org)

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