

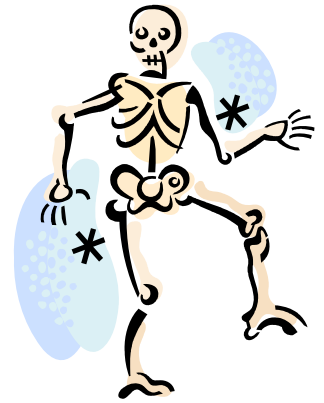


OakCreek

## Fall Prevention Tip of the Month July 2010

### Healthy Bones

A fall can result in a broken hip, leg, arm, wrist or other fracture that may lead to a hospital or nursing home stay, disability, or death. Maintaining the strength of your bones can help prevent fractures.



#### **Ways to keep bones strong:**

- Consume adequate amounts of **calcium**. People over age 50 should get 1,200 mg of calcium daily (equal to four 8 ounce glasses of milk) by eating calcium-rich foods and taking calcium supplements.
  - Good dietary sources of calcium include dairy products such as low-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese; orange juice, cereals, and other foods fortified with calcium; dark green, leafy vegetables such as broccoli, collard greens, and bok choy; sardines; salmon with bones; soybeans; tofu; and nuts such as almonds.
  - For example, you could get 1,200 mg of calcium in a day by having a bowl of fortified cereal with milk for breakfast, a cup of tomato soup prepared with milk and one ounce of Swiss cheese for lunch, and an 8 oz container of plain yogurt for a snack.
- Don't forget **Vitamin D!** Vitamin D helps your body absorb calcium and has been shown to prevent falls and fractures. The Institute of Medicine's recommended intake of vitamin D is 200 IU up to age 50, 400 IU between the ages of 51 and 70, and 600 IU after age 70. That recommendation is under review and will likely increase, since strong evidence shows optimal intakes are much higher, at least 1,000-2,000 IU for those over age 2. Consult with your doctor about how much Vitamin D you should be taking.
  - The best source of Vitamin D is sunlight – the sun causes your body to make Vitamin D. However, many people don't get enough Vitamin D this way, especially here in Wisconsin, so eating foods with Vitamin D and taking supplements help.
  - Good dietary sources of vitamin D are herring, sardines, salmon, tuna, liver, eggs, and fortified milk and other fortified foods.
  - But Vitamin D supplements are still often needed above and beyond that found in food to get to the recommended levels.

- Ask your doctor about a blood test that measures vitamin D levels.
- **Exercise regularly.** Exercise makes your bones stronger and may slow bone loss from osteoporosis – a disease that weakens and thins bones so they break easily.
- Talk with your doctor about a **bone density test.** This is a painless test that measures your bone health and risk for future fractures. Women over age 65 and men over age 70 should have a bone density test. Medicare and many insurance companies cover the test. Based on the results, your doctor may prescribe a new medication to make your bones stronger and decrease the risk of fractures.
- **Quit smoking and limit alcohol use.** Smoking and heavy alcohol use can decrease bone mass and increase your chance of fractures.
- Maintain a **healthy weight.** Being underweight increases the risk of bone loss and broken bones.

