

Creating Health & Nutrition Fact Sheets

Calcium is needed for strong bones. However, other vitamins and minerals are also necessary for calcium to be used effectively by our bodies.

Vitamin D

This vitamin is so important that it is added to many calcium-rich foods and supplements to allow calcium to be absorbed. The best food sources of vitamin D are egg yolks and some fish. Our skin also creates vitamin D when exposed to sunlight. It only takes 20 minutes of sunlight each day.

Other Nutrients That Contribute to Bone Health

Deficiencies can occur in the winter when days are short and winter clothing covers most of our skin. People with dark skin create less vitamin D. Seniors may also be at risk if outdoor time is limited.

Phosphorus

This mineral is also found in the bone structure. It is more easily absorbed

than calcium. Phosphorus is found in many foods we eat, and people are rarely deficient. Some good sources are dairy foods, liver, and sunflower seeds.

Magnesium

Magnesium is another mineral important for bone structure. It is found in green leafy vegetables, nuts, seeds, bananas, and grain foods. Deficiencies are rare but do occur in alcoholics and those with kidney disease.

Vitamins K and C

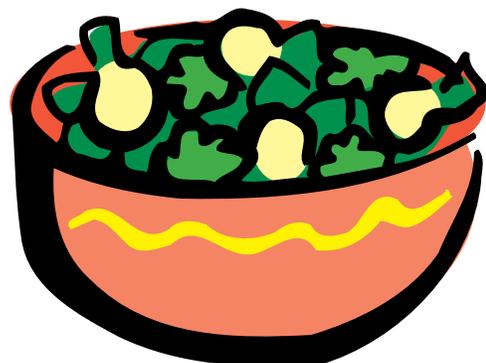
These are important for collagen production, the first step in bone formation. Vitamin K is

also involved in building cartilage and connective tissues. Vitamin C is a powerful antioxidant that fights aging factors, including bone depletion. Vitamin K is found significantly in liver and green leafy vegetables. Citrus fruits, kiwis, and cabbage are good sources of vitamin C.

Warning: Vitamin A is needed for many body functions, but too much can contribute to osteoporosis. Vitamin A is found in eggs, the fat in dairy foods, and green and orange fruits and vegetables. If you eat these foods, do not use a supplement in any of the following forms: multivitamin, fish oil, or single supplement providing more than 100 percent of the RDA (700 mg for women).

Shopping Tips

Calcium-rich foods with added vitamin D are the best choice for good absorption by the body. Choose a variety of foods to get the other important vitamins and minerals in your meals. Spinach, oranges, and dairy foods are good sources of vitamins and minerals important for bone health.



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