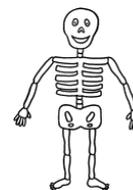


Health & Wellbeing

August – Healthy bones



Stronger bones, stronger you

Peak bone mass is reached when you're in your late twenties, and, after this it is vital to continue to maintain the bone you have built.

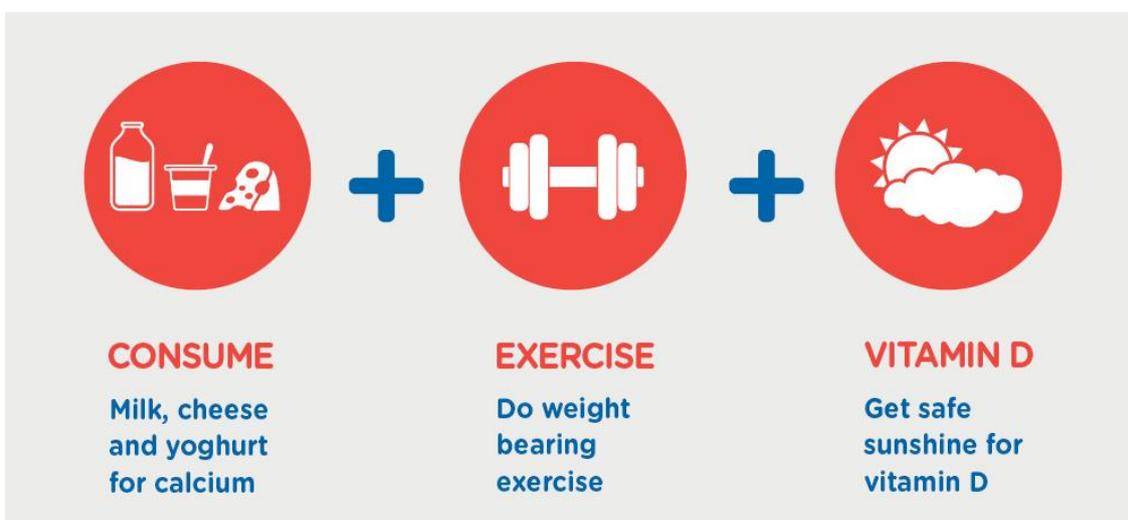
Women are at greater risk of developing osteoporosis because of the rapid drop in the hormone oestrogen during menopause causes bone loss.

What is osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis occurs when bones lose calcium and other minerals, making them fragile and more likely to fracture. In Australia, osteoporosis affects 1.2 million people. This number is expected to increase as our population grows older.

What can I do?

The good news is, if you take some simple actions and lead a healthy lifestyle, you can give your bones the best chance of remaining strong.



Consume plenty of calcium-rich foods, such as milk, cheese and yoghurt, every day

Calcium is essential for building strong bones as well as supporting muscle and nerve function. Almost 99% of the body's calcium is found in bones, where it combines with other minerals to form the hard crystals that give bones their strength and structure.

Milk, cheese and yoghurt are the top three sources of calcium in the Australian diet.

MINIMUM RECOMMENDED NUMBER OF SERVES FROM THE DAIRY FOOD GROUP

	Age (years)	No. of serves per day
Men	19–70	2 ½
	70+	3 ½
Women	19–50	2 ½
	50+	4
	Pregnant or breast feeding	2 ½

Adapted from: NHMRC 2013 Australian Dietary Guidelines (Canberra, ACT). The dairy food group includes milk, cheese, yogurt and/or alternatives (alternatives include 1 cup [250 ml] soy beverage or beverages made from rice or other cereals which contain at least 100 mg calcium per 100 ml).

ONE SERVE OF DAIRY IS EQUIVALENT TO:



milk
1 cup
(250 ml)

OR



cheese
2 slices
(40 g)

OR



yogurt
¾ cup
(200 g)

OR



ricotta
½ cup
(120 g)

Participate in regular exercise and physical activity

Exercising regularly is vital to help maintain bone strength. Activities such as jogging, aerobics, tennis, dancing, netball or any exercise that is 'weight bearing' and done on your feet will benefit your bones. Lifting weights or resistance training is another great way to maintain strong bones.

If you're a parent, leading a healthy lifestyle is the best way to teach and encourage your children to adopt good lifelong health habits. Being active together as a family outdoors is also the ideal time to get vitamin D from safe sun exposure which is also important for building and maintaining strong bones.



Have regular and safe sun exposure for adequate vitamin D production

Vitamin D is important for bone health because it helps absorb calcium. During summer in the southern parts of Australia, and all year round in the north, most of us need a few minutes a day of sun exposure to an area of skin equivalent to your face, arms and hands to help with our vitamin D levels. In winter in the southern parts of Australia, most of us need about two to three hours per week of safe sun exposure.

