

Osteoporosis Diet Dangers

Getting enough calcium and vitamin D is essential for warding off osteoporosis. For even stronger bones, avoid these everyday osteoporosis diet dangers.

Osteoporosis Diet Danger 1: Salt Is Bad for the Bone!

Salt can pose a great risk, even to strong bones. In the typical North American diet we get about twice as much sodium as we should. The 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans advise limiting sodium to 2,300 milligrams a day – equal to a teaspoon of salt. But most people get at least 4,000 milligrams a day. Salt shows up in nearly all processed foods, including whole grain breads, breakfast cereals, and fast foods. Nearly 75% of the sodium we eat are from processed foods. Generally speaking, for every 2,300 milligrams of sodium you take in, about 40 milligrams of calcium is lost in the urine.



Removing the salt shaker from the table, and cooking without added salt, helps. But avoiding processed foods provides the biggest bang for the buck. Processed foods supply 75% of the sodium we eat.

Getting the recommended amounts of calcium and vitamin D every day helps offset bone loss from salt.

- *Under 50:* 1,000 milligrams of calcium (the equivalent of three 8-ounce glasses of milk), and 200 IU (International Units) of vitamin D daily.
- *Over 50:* 1,200 milligrams of calcium (about half a glass more of milk), and 400 IU of vitamin D daily. After age 70 the amount of vitamin D increases to 600 IU daily.

Good sources of calcium are cheese, yogurt, milk, sardines, and dark leafy greens like spinach, kale, turnips, and collard greens

Good sources of vitamin D are natural sunlight and from fortified milk, egg yolks, saltwater fish, liver, and supplements.

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Osteoporosis Diet Danger 2: Some Popular Drinks

Many soft drinks and certain other carbonated soft drinks contain phosphoric acid, which can increase calcium excretion in your urine. And nearly all soft drinks lack calcium. That combination spells trouble by increasing our risk of developing osteoporosis.

The occasional soda is fine, but many people consume more than an occasional can or glass. To make matters worse, soft drink consumers may also avoid calcium-rich beverages that help bones, such as milk, yogurt-based drinks, and calcium and vitamin D fortified orange juice.

To prevent osteoporosis, instead sip these drinks:

- Eight ounces of orange juice fortified with calcium and vitamin D
- A mixture of fortified orange juice and seltzer or club soda that's free of phosphoric acid
- Fruit smoothie: Combine 8 ounces fat-free yogurt, one medium banana or a cup of fresh or frozen berries and 2 ice cubes in a blender or food processor
- Fat-free plain or chocolate milk

Osteoporosis Diet Danger 3: The Cost of Caffeine

Caffeine leaches calcium from bones, sapping their strength causing us to lose about 6 milligrams of calcium for every 100 milligrams of caffeine ingested. Coffee is a major caffeine source. For example, a 16-ounce cup of coffee can provide 320 milligrams of caffeine. High-caffeine pops can contain up to 80 milligrams of caffeine per can or more. Although tea also contains caffeine, it does not appear to harm bone density due to plant compounds found in the tea that protect bone.

Ready to curb caffeine? Here are some tips:

- Wean yourself from coffee by drinking half regular and half-decaf drinks to start
- Avoid caffeine-rich drinks
- Reach for decaffeinated iced tea or hot tea
- Splurge on a decaf, fat-free latte drink and get 450 milligrams of calcium in the bargain

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Osteoporosis Diet Danger 4: Crash Dieting

Long-term “crash” dieting, or calorie restriction, can have an impact on your bone health. Depending on height, weight age, and activity levels the amount of calories an individual needs will vary but should never be below 1,200 calories per day to maintain bones and tissues density. If your caloric intake is significantly below that for an extended period of time, you’re probably doing damage.

To lose weight while still preserving bone health, stick to a balanced and healthy meal plan like the Mediterranean diet which promotes eating primarily plant-based foods, such as fruits and vegetables, whole grains, legumes and nuts; replacing butter with healthy fats, such as olive oil; using herbs and spices instead of salt to flavor foods. Keep in mind that a healthy weight loss is 1-2 lbs per week. When you change your nutrition plan pay attention to the foods you are cutting out and how they may affect the amount of calcium, vitamin D and protein you are getting.

Bones are about 50% protein. Bone repair requires a steady stream of dietary amino acids, the building blocks of body proteins. The suggested daily protein intake is 0.8 grams of protein per 2.2 pounds for men and women over age 19. That amounts to about 55 grams of protein a day for a 150-pound woman and about 64 grams a day for a 175-pound man.

Get the protein you need to bolster bones with these protein sources:

- 3 ounces light tuna, drained: 22 grams protein
- 3 ounces cooked chicken, turkey, or pork tenderloin: about 20 grams
- 3 ounces cooked salmon: 19 grams
- 8 ounces fat-free plain yogurt: 13 grams
- 8 ounces fat-free milk: 8 grams
- 1 medium egg: 6 grams

Sources: <http://www.webmd.com/osteoporosis/living-with-osteoporosis-7/diet-weight-loss?page=2>; <http://www.webmd.com/osteoporosis/living-with-osteoporosis-7/diet-dangers>