

Eating for Healthy Bones – What Really Matters

Our bones are living tissue—they are constantly being built up and broken down. Bone density can decrease with age, hormonal changes, or a lack of physical activity. Postmenopausal women are particularly affected. The good news: diet and exercise have a major impact on bone health and can actively help prevent osteoporosis.

Calcium – The Building Block of Strong Bones

Calcium is one of the most important minerals for strong bones and teeth. In addition to dairy products, dark green vegetables such as broccoli, kale, arugula, and spinach also provide valuable calcium—combined with many other micronutrients. Sesame seeds, almonds, and mineral-rich water can also help meet your needs. If calcium intake is insufficient over an extended period, the body draws on its reserves in the bones. That is why ensuring an adequate daily intake of calcium should be a priority.

Magnesium – Often Underestimated

Magnesium is essential for muscles, the nervous system, and bone metabolism. About 60% of magnesium is found in the skeleton. Additionally, magnesium supports the activation of vitamin D and thus indirectly contributes to bone health. Particularly good sources include whole grains, legumes, green vegetables, nuts, and seeds. The body's need for magnesium can be increased, especially during times of stress, regular alcohol consumption, heavy sweating, or an unbalanced diet.

Vitamin D – Essential for Strong Bones

Vitamin D improves calcium absorption in the intestines and plays a central role in bone metabolism. Since the body's natural production of vitamin D depends heavily on sunlight, many people—especially during the winter months—do not get enough of it. While fatty fish, egg yolks, and mushrooms provide small amounts, this is often insufficient. Therefore, depending on blood levels, targeted supplementation may be advisable.

Proteins – important for bones and muscles

It is often forgotten that bones consist not only of minerals but also of a stable collagen framework made of proteins. A sufficient protein intake therefore supports bone formation and, at the same time, helps maintain muscle mass. High-quality protein sources such as fish, eggs, dairy products, legumes, tofu, or lean meat are particularly recommended. Fish, in particular, provides additional anti-inflammatory omega-3 fatty acids, which can have a positive effect on joints and bones.

Bones Need Exercise

In addition to diet, exercise is one of the most important factors for strong bones. So-called “high-impact” exercises—that is, movements involving short bursts of impact or jumping—are particularly effective. These include, for example, strength training, brisk uphill walking, tennis, or jumping exercises.

These activities promote bone formation while also helping to build muscle. Strong muscles protect the bones and reduce the risk of falls. Even small daily habits like climbing stairs, taking regular walks, or doing strength training can make a difference over time.

Practical Tips for Everyday Life

Even simple combinations can specifically support bone health:

- Breakfast: curd cheese with yogurt or skyr with berries and oatmeal
- Main meal: vegetables as a base, supplemented with high-quality protein sources such as fish, legumes, or tofu, and fiber-rich grain products
- Snacks: nuts, sesame crackers with cheese, or hummus with vegetables
- Exercise: daily walks plus 2–3 strength training sessions per week

Also important to know: highly processed foods, soft drinks, smoking, being underweight, and excessive alcohol consumption can have a negative long-term impact on bone health.

Conclusion

Strong bones result from a combination of a balanced diet rich in protein, calcium, magnesium, and vitamin D, along with targeted exercise. Vegetables, in particular, should form the foundation of your diet—supplemented by high-quality protein sources and regular exercise. Taking care of your bone health early on supports long-term stability, mobility, and quality of life.

Personalized nutritional counseling can help identify potential nutrient deficiencies early on and tailor your diet, exercise routine, and appropriate supplements to your specific needs.