



## *Nutrition Information for Older Oconto County Adults*

# It's Never Too Late to Protect Your Bones!

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Osteoporosis has been described as an adolescent disease with a geriatric onset. But today, doctors know much more about preventing, detecting, and treating this disease than ever before. A healthy diet and weight-bearing exercise are two key prevention factors which can reduce your risk for osteoporosis, no matter what your age.

#### Calcium and Vitamin D

Even if you haven't been consuming enough calcium all along, you're still young enough to make a difference. Consuming enough calcium and vitamin D at any age is critical for preventing bone loss and avoiding fractures.

For older adults, the National Institutes of Health advises up to 1,500 milligrams of calcium daily to protect against osteoporosis. Between 400-800 IU/day of vitamin D are recommended for aging adults.

Dairy products are the best calcium sources, but dark green leafy vegetables, broccoli, sardines and salmon with bones, and fortified foods, such as orange juice and breakfast cereal, also supply calcium.

Vitamin D is important because it helps you absorb and deposit calcium in your bones and teeth. Your body makes vitamin D from two sources - sunlight and food. Just 10 to 15 minutes of direct sun exposure three times a week, or two cups of milk each day meet the RDA for adults.

With age, the body's ability to absorb calcium and produce vitamin D decreases. Depending upon how much of these you get each day from food, you may need to take a supplement. However, the main nourishment for healthy bones should come from food, not pills. Food supplies other nutrients that your bones (and whole body) need. Also, excessive doses of vitamin D pose risks and should be avoided.

Think about the amount of calcium-containing foods you eat. Do you eat enough of the following foods to meet the recommended amounts?

<b>Food</b>	<b>Approximate Calcium (Milligrams)</b>
Milk (1 cup)	295
Cheese Pizza (1 slice)	220
Yogurt, fruit (1 cup)	315
Calcium-fortified orange juice (3/4 cup)	225
Mac and Cheese (1/2 cup)	180
Orange (1)	50
Broccoli (1/2 cup)	45
Kale (1/2 cup)	45
Pinto beans (1/2 cup)	40
Lettuce greens (1/2 cup)	10

### **Move Those Bones!**

Regardless of age, exercise helps strengthen muscle and bone, improve posture and prevent falls by aiding balance. Any activity you do on your feet with your bones supporting your weight helps. Walking, stair climbing, dancing, or shoveling snow are all examples of weight-bearing activities which help promote bone health.

Your bones also respond to the force of muscles pulling on them. Strong muscles help bones become stronger. To build arm or shoulder strength, use things you have around your house, such as canned goods.

You can't control all factors that keep your "support system" (your skeleton) healthful. But regardless of your age, gender or body build, a healthy diet and physical activity can help reduce risks and promote stronger bones.