

Walk  
**NEBRASKA****Achieve Good Bone Health**

Our bones provide structure for our body, protect organs, anchor muscles, and store calcium. Adequate calcium consumption and weight bearing physical activity build strong bones, maintain bone mass, and may reduce the risk of osteoporosis later in life. Osteoporosis is the deterioration of bone tissue generally in the hip, wrist and spine in both women and men. About 85-90% of adult bone mass is acquired by age 18 in girls and 20 in boys. Typically, young females are less likely to meet recommended intake levels for dairy, so it is especially important for young girls to consume adequate calcium and be physically active to build their skeletal mass for adulthood.

**Calcium**

Calcium is a mineral needed by the body for healthy bones, teeth, and proper function of the heart, muscles, and nerves. The body cannot produce calcium. It must be absorbed from food. Good sources of calcium include:

- Dairy products—*milk, cheese, yogurt*
- Dark green leafy vegetables—*broccoli, kales, turnip greens*
- Calcium fortified foods—*orange juice, cereal, bread, soy beverages, tofu products*
- Legumes and Nuts—*navy beans, pinto beans, almonds*

*How much calcium do you need?*

According to the 2010 Dietary Guidelines, Americans need:

women and men, 19–50 years of age	1,000 mg of calcium per day
women and men, 51 years of age and older	1,200 mg of calcium per day

*Examples of calcium content in foods:*

8 oz. glass of milk = 300 mg; 8 oz. of plain, low-fat yogurt = 400 mg; ½ cup chopped broccoli = 47 mg; ½ cup cooked navy beans = 60 mg; 8 oz. glass of calcium fortified orange juice = 300 mg

**Vitamin D**

Your body needs vitamin D to absorb calcium. Without enough vitamin D, bones can lose mass and weaken. It also helps with muscle performance and balance, which can reduce the risk of falling. This is why some milk, yogurt, soy beverages, orange juice, and cereal products are vitamin-D fortified.

**Weight-bearing Physical Activity**

Weight-bearing physical activities cause muscles and bones to work against gravity. Examples include: walking, jogging, running, jumping rope, tennis, racquetball, basketball, soccer, stair climbing, dancing, hiking, weight lifting. Incorporating weight-bearing physical activity into an exercise plan of 30 minutes most days is a great way to keep bones healthy and meet physical activity recommendations set forth in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Osteoporosis Foundation, 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, USDA Nutrient DataBank, [www.knowmybones.com](http://www.knowmybones.com), [www.nof.org](http://www.nof.org).

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