

May is Osteoporosis Awareness Month: Bone Health Is As Easy As 1-2-3

by Maggie Cimarolli
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ST. LOUIS - May is Osteoporosis Awareness Month. Research shows that dairy foods are integral for building and maintaining a lifetime of healthy bones because they contain nutrients like calcium, protein, vitamin D, phosphorus, potassium, and magnesium. “Getting these key nutrients in with 3 servings a day of dairy is important at every stage in life,” states Maggie Cimarolli, nutrition educator with the St. Louis District Dairy Council.

1-2-3 age groups...

It is crucial for children and adolescents to consume enough dairy. Up to 90 percent of bone mass is accumulated by the age of eighteen. Children who achieve peak bone mass reduce their risk for developing osteoporosis, a bone-crippling disease, later in life.

Adults also need to focus on dairy consumption throughout their lives. Bone loss and a reduced ability to replace bone tissue begins around the age of forty. Adults who consume a bone-healthy diet, engage in exercise, and eliminate bad habits like smoking can avoid premature bone loss and reduce the risk of fractures.

Seniors with strong bones have a decreased risk of falls and fractures, which can affect mobility and independence. Seniors actually require more calcium, dietary protein, and vitamin D to maintain healthy bones than younger people do.

1-2-3 servings...

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend everyone age nine and above get three daily servings of low-fat or fat-free dairy to support bone health. One serving of dairy is one cup of milk, one cup of yogurt, or 1.5 ounces of cheese. “There are so many ways to work more dairy into your diet to achieve the 3 servings per day recommendation,” states Cimarolli. Some examples include: making oatmeal with milk instead of water, preparing a veggie-packed salad with shredded cheese, blending a yogurt and fruit smoothie, layering a lunchtime sandwich with cheese, or simply enjoying a glass of cold milk.

1-2-3 Key Nutrients...

Calcium is a major building block of the skeleton. In fact, 99 percent of the calcium found in the body resides in the bones. When the body isn’t supplied with enough calcium, it takes it from the bones which weakens them. Dairy foods are the most readily available source of calcium. One serving of dairy provides one-third of the total daily needs.

Protein is essential for building and preserving bone mass. Dairy foods are a good source of high-quality protein.

Vitamin D helps the body absorb calcium and ensures the correct renewal and mineralization of bones. Many dairy foods are fortified with vitamin D to support calcium absorption.

For More Information

For tips on dairy and bone health, go to www.stldairyCouncil.org and download “Bone Health, As Easy as 1-2-3.” For more information on dairy foods, call (314) 835-9668, email MCimarolli@STLDairyCouncil.org or visit us on Facebook and Instagram at STLDairyCouncil.

Berry Overnight Oats Recipe

Start your day the bone-healthy way with this simple and easy overnight oat recipe. Preparing ahead of time will ensure a quick dose of dairy during busy mornings.

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup low-fat strawberry yogurt
- 1/4 cup 1% milk or fat-free milk
- 1/2 cup frozen unsweetened berries
- 1/3 cup cooking oats, dry

Directions:

1. Combine all ingredients in a cup or jar. Stir to mix thoroughly.
2. Cover and refrigerate several hours or overnight.
3. Top with vanilla yogurt and your favorite fresh berries.