



Osteoporosis Canada

Ostéoporose Canada

# Eating for Bone Health

Bones need many nutrients to stay strong. **Calcium** is important to help maintain bone strength. **Vitamin D** helps our body absorb calcium. **Protein** is needed to build and repair bone tissue. The information below will help you plan food choices for bone health.

## CALCIUM

### How much do I need every day?

**Age Under 50 = 1000 mg Calcium\***

**Age 50+ = 1200 mg Calcium\***

\*From a combination of food and supplements.

### How do I get enough?

Eating a variety of calcium-rich foods is the best way to meet your calcium needs.

Many foods contain calcium, including broccoli, canned salmon with bones, bread and oranges.

However, foods from the Milk and Alternatives food group, such as milk, yogurt and cheese, contain the highest amounts of calcium in a form that is well absorbed by the body.

### Not sure you're getting enough?

Before deciding to take a calcium supplement, figure out how much calcium you get from food:

1. Use an assessment tool to see how much calcium you are consuming. Contact Osteoporosis Canada, Manitoba Chapter for an assessment brochure or visit [www.osteoporosis.ca](http://www.osteoporosis.ca) to calculate your calcium intake online.
2. If you determine that you are not getting enough calcium, try choosing one or two foods that you like from the list of calcium-rich foods provided in the assessment tool, and include them as part of your meals and snacks throughout the day.
3. If you cannot get enough calcium from food alone, a combination of food and calcium supplements can help. Only take a calcium supplement if your healthcare provider has advised you to do so.
4. Take only enough calcium supplements to consume a total amount of calcium that is close to your daily recommendation.

**To absorb the most calcium, spread calcium-rich foods and supplements throughout the day.**

**e.g.** If you need 1200 mg of calcium and regularly get 700 mg from the food you eat, you only need an extra 500 mg of calcium from supplements – you do not need to take more.

Talk to a pharmacist to help choose a good calcium supplement for you – make sure he/she knows how much calcium you regularly consume from food.

**Get your calcium from food as much as possible. Only take a calcium supplement after talking with a healthcare professional.**

# VITAMIN D

## How much do I need every day?

Age Under 50 = 400-1000 IU Vitamin D

Age 50+ = 800-2000 IU Vitamin D

There are very few food sources of Vitamin D. It can be produced by our skin in sunlight, but this is not a reliable way to get enough. As we age the skin's ability to make Vitamin D also decreases. So, Canadian adults should take a Vitamin D supplement every day.

Here are some sources of Vitamin D:

- Vitamin D supplements are available in 400 IU and 1000 IU per tablet.
- Most multi-vitamins contain 400 IU per tablet.
- Some calcium supplements contain Vitamin D. Check the label.

# PROTEIN

Protein works with calcium and Vitamin D to build and maintain bone. Protein is found in meats, like beef and chicken, and alternatives, like fish, legumes and eggs, and in milk products. For more information refer to Canada's Food Guide. Include a protein containing food at each meal:

- e.g.** Eggs or cheese at breakfast  
A meat sandwich at lunch  
Cottage cheese, or legumes, or meat at dinner  
Drink milk or fortified soy beverage with meals

*Special thanks to the  
St. James Assiniboia 55+ Centre  
for help in development of this resource.*



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Osteoporosis Canada, Manitoba Chapter

123 St. Anne's Road

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Canada R2M 2Z1

Tel: (204) 772-3498 | Fax: (204) 772-4200

Email: [manitoba@osteoporosis.ca](mailto:manitoba@osteoporosis.ca)

**Osteoporosis  
Canada  
recommends daily  
Vitamin D  
supplementation  
for all Canadian  
adults year  
round.**

## ONE LAST TIP

**About one third of bone  
is made up of protein.  
Eating enough protein  
every day is important  
to help keep bones  
healthy.**