

# STAYING WELL

## Promoting Healthy Bones



**Bone is alive!!!** Bone is a living and growing tissue. Throughout life, bone is constantly being renewed in a process called remodeling. During remodeling, old bone is removed and it is replaced with fresh new bone.

### At what age do I need to be concerned about my bones?

It's never too late to take action to promote healthy bones. Healthy bone actions that should begin in childhood and continue throughout your lifetime include:

- eating a well-balanced diet rich in calcium and vitamin D;
- participating in regular exercise;
- taking safety precautions to protect your bones and prevent falls;
- limiting alcohol intake;
- avoiding excessive dieting and excessive thinness; and
- talking to a medical professional about promoting healthy bones

### Why does calcium matter?

Think of your bones as a bank account in which you "deposit" and "withdraw" calcium throughout life. Calcium is a mineral that makes bone dense (thick) and strong. During childhood, the teen years and early adulthood you build your bone bank. The maximum bone density you will ever have, is largely determined by your genetics. After age 25, bone healthy actions help maintain bone mass. Throughout your life, if your dietary calcium intake is too low, your body will "withdraw" the calcium it needs from your bone bank. Over time, if more calcium is taken out of your bones than is put in, the result may be thin, weak bones (osteoporosis). In your senior years, usually after age 70, thin, weak bones may break more easily during normal activities. It is important to meet your daily calcium recommendation by choosing a well-balanced, calcium rich diet and including three cups of milk a day. If you don't, or can't drink milk, choose other fortified foods and beverages and/or supplements.

### Why is Vitamin D important?

Vitamin D is necessary to build and maintain strong bones by helping your body absorb and use calcium. Except for fatty fish and fortified milk, there are few reliable dietary sources of vitamin D. To get the proper amount of vitamin D, sun exposure and supplements are generally necessary.



### Get moving!

An ideal exercise program combines weight-bearing, muscle-strengthening, and posture and balance exercises. Weight-bearing simply means that your feet and legs are supporting or carrying your weight. This type of exercise builds bone mass in youth and maintains it in adulthood. Some examples of weight-bearing exercises include walking, dancing and climbing stairs. Muscle strengthening exercises build muscle that helps support your bones. Lifting weights, using resistance bands and exercising on resistance machines are ways to strengthen muscle. Proper body alignment and posture training exercises promote correct posture and may help to minimize the stooped posture that results from osteoporosis. To ensure your safety, consult your medical professional before beginning an exercise program.