

Powerful Bones, Powerful Families

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS



Taking care of our bones during childhood and the teen years is an important way to avoid bone fractures and osteoporosis (thinning of bones) later in life. It's so important that some people call osteoporosis a "kids' disease with adult consequences."



DID YOU KNOW?

- Girls' bones grow the fastest between the ages of 11 and 14 and boys' bones between the ages of 13 and 17. By age 20 the skeleton is almost complete.
- About 40% of bone mass is built during adolescence, making it the most critical time to get enough bone-building nutrients like calcium and vitamin D.
- Research done in Alberta showed that many Alberta kids aren't eating well enough or getting enough physical activity to keep their bones strong.*
- We need more than just calcium to build strong bones. Our bones also need vitamin D, protein, phosphorus, zinc, vitamin A and magnesium.
- You are a role model! Your children learn healthy habits by watching their greatest model in life: YOU! Enjoy calcium-rich foods in front of your children, and show them that bone-building physical activities are easy and fun.

*Calengor, K.E. (2007). Nutrition, Physical Activity and Related Health Behaviours in Youth as Assessed by a Web-Survey. University of Alberta, Edmonton.

WHAT YOU CAN DO!

1. Get Moving with Bone-building Activities

Weight-bearing activities are the only type of physical activity that builds strong bones. These activities make you push, pull or carry something, or make your body work against gravity, so that your feet, legs and arms support your body weight.

Examples of bone-building physical activities:

Hopscotch	Walking	Jogging/running	Skipping/jumping rope
Climbing stairs	Hiking	Inline or ice skating	Gymnastics
Racquet sports	Soccer	Basketball	Field hockey
Dancing	Volleyball	Baseball or softball	Pulling a wagon
Skiing/snowboarding	Carrying groceries	Pushing a swing	

There are lots of ways for your family to get active! Find the activities that your family finds the most fun. Have your family mix and match two or more of these activities to build your own games!

2. Include Bone-Building Foods in Your Diet

The easiest way to get enough calcium and other bone-building nutrients is to have bone-building foods every day, particularly foods from the Milk and Alternatives food group including, milk, cheese and yogurt. Energize your family with these bone-building tips:

- Add milk or powdered milk to recipes, meals and snacks. Try making soup, casseroles, muffins, desserts or oatmeal with milk instead of water.
- Stock up on calcium-packed snacks like fruit yogurts, cheese cubes or strings, pudding made with milk, and single-serving containers of white or chocolate milk.
- Bone-building foods can taste great, be fun to eat and easily fit into your fast-paced lifestyle. In a hurry? Think about fruit smoothies, bean and cheese burritos, yogurt dips for vegetables or fruit, or grilled cheese.

3. Final Action: Get Powerful Bones!

Set bone-healthy goals for your family involving both food and physical activity. Write your family's bone-health goals in the space below, then take action for powerful bones!

Step 1: Decide what specific action your family would like to have as your goal. Make sure it's realistic for your family.

Step 2: Decide when your family will start working on your goal. Post your goals on the fridge. Set a time frame so you can check your progress as a family. What is working? What is not? Revise your goal if you need to.

Step 3: Celebrate your family's successes in meeting your goals!

EXAMPLE GOAL:

Have at least one (specific and realistic) calcium-rich food (give specific example) in everyone's lunch (specific and realistic) for every school day for the next month (when).

GOAL #1 (bone-building foods):

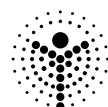
GOAL #2 (bone-building physical activity):

For more information on the Power4Bones program, or on nutrition and bone health, visit the *Teachers and Parents* section of www.power4bones.com.



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