

Smoking and Alcohol

Smoking and drinking more than the recommended levels can harm your bones as they reduce your body's ability to absorb calcium and change how your bone-building cells work.

Men and women should have no more than 14 units of alcohol per week spread over 3 or more days. 14 units is the same as:

- 6 pints of average-strength beer, or
- 10 small (125ml) glasses of lower-strength wine, or
- 14 small (25ml) shots of spirits



Speak to your GP practice for more information about what support is available if you are worried about your alcohol intake or with smoking cessation.

Useful Information

The Royal Osteoporosis Society has developed information leaflets on all aspects of osteoporosis which are available on their website. They also have a free help line where specialist nurses can answer your questions or concerns about bone health or living with osteoporosis.

- **Leaflets and other information:** www.theros.org.uk
- **Nurse help line:** email: nurses@theros.org.uk
phone (free): 0300 102 3030
- **Local exercise classes for falls prevention / pain management:**
www.highlifehighland.org/health-and-wellbeing
- **Calcium:** www.theros.org.uk/calcium-chooser
- **Vitamin D:** www.theros.org.uk/vitamin-d
- **Exercise:** www.theros.org.uk/exercise
- **NHS Highland osteoporosis service information:**
www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk/osteoporosis



Lifestyle advice to help
keep our **bones healthy**

What is Osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis is a condition where the internal structure of our bones becomes thinner and weaker causing them to lose strength. This can result in bones breaking more easily even after a minor bump or fall.

Anyone can have osteoporosis and although it is more common in older women after menopause, men, younger adults and children can also have osteoporosis.

There are drug treatments that can help strengthen your bones if you have osteoporosis.

Healthy eating for bones

Eating a healthy well balanced diet and maintaining a healthy body weight will help to protect your bones. Try to eat foods from the four main food groups.

- Fruit and vegetables
- Carbohydrates like bread, potatoes, pasta and cereals
- Dairy and alternatives like milk and cheese
- Protein like beans, eggs, fish and meat



Calcium

Calcium gives your bones the strength and hardness that they need to cope with everyday activities. Calcium is measured in milligrams (mg) and most adults need **700mg** of calcium a day. Plenty foods are rich in calcium and if you eat a balanced diet you will usually get enough calcium from your food without needing to take a supplement.

Calcium rich foods include

- Leafy green vegetables like broccoli, cabbage and spinach
- Dairy product like milk cheese and yogurt
- Fruit like oranges and dried figs
- Fish like sardines and mackerel
- Seeds, pulses and beans



Vitamin D

Vitamin D is vital as it helps your body absorb and use calcium. This helps to keep your bones, muscles and teeth strong. You can get vitamin D from sunlight, diet and supplements; however most of the vitamin D we use is produced from the reaction of the sun's ray on our skin.

In Scotland our skin can only make vitamin D from sunlight in the summer between mid April to the end of September. During this time we should try to expose our bare skin (such as forearms) to direct sunlight, without sunscreen, for 10 minutes once or twice per day, taking care not to burn. We can then apply sunscreen.

The sun's rays are not strong enough to make vitamin D in the winter, therefore everyone should consider taking a vitamin D supplement from the end of September to mid April.

Vitamin D is measured in micrograms (μg) or international units (IU). The UK daily recommended dose for vitamin D is $10\mu\text{g}$ which is the equivalent to 400 IU. As we live in the north of Scotland we would recommend taking $20\mu\text{g}/800\text{IU}$ or $25\mu\text{g}/1000\text{IU}$.

Some food contains a small amount of vitamin D. It is difficult to get sufficient vitamin D from food alone and it is important these foods are eaten in moderation as part of a healthy diet.

- Oily fish
- Eggs
- Pork products such as sausages, bacon or pork chops
- Fortified foods such as certain breakfast cereals, bread and yoghurt



Exercise for Strong Bones

Being active and doing exercise helps keep our bones and muscles strong and this can decrease our chance of falling and breaking a bone. We should try to include both weight bearing and muscle strengthening exercises. Dancing, jogging and brisk walking are all examples of weight bearing exercise.

Exercise for balance and coordination are also important. Tai Chi, Yoga and Pilates are all activities that can help if you're unsteady on your feet.