

Prevent a bone break, drink milk to boost calcium

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Boosting calcium intake by drinking milk could reduce healthy adults' chances of a debilitating bone break. In a new study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, healthy men and women supplemented with 1,200 mg of calcium per day - the amount in four glasses of milk - reduced their risk of bone fractures by 72 percent.

An international team of researchers from University Hospital Zurich and Dartmouth Medical School divided 930 healthy men and women ages 27 to 80 into two groups for a four-year intervention study. One group was given a placebo, while the other took a daily calcium supplement containing 1,200 mg of calcium daily - the calcium recommendation for adults over the age of 51.

The researchers found that those receiving an additional 1,200 mg of calcium were significantly less likely to have a bone fracture of any sort during the four-year period, including everyday activity fractures (bone breaks that occurred while walking or standing) and seemingly unavoidable accident-related fractures (bone breaks sustained during falls, running, sports injuries or car accidents).

In fact, during the four-year intervention, not a single adult receiving calcium experienced a fracture tied to everyday activities - fractures that researchers call "potentially preventable" and more likely linked to bone health.

To sustain the benefits, researchers found that the adults needed to

maintain their calcium intakes. After the four-year supplementation period ended, the bone benefits dissipated, underscoring the need to adopt lifelong habits, like drinking milk, to prevent bone loss.

Adult bones continue to grow in density and strength until about age 35. After that, preventing further bone loss is essential. Poor bone health and bone fractures can have negative consequences for adults of all ages, interfering with recreational activities, ability to work or physical capacity to exercise and stay healthy. These adult bone fractures may also be an early sign of risk for osteoporosis - a serious condition of brittle bones afflicting more than 10 million Americans.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend three servings of fat free or lowfat milk each day, providing 90 percent of the recommended daily value of calcium for most adults. Milk is also an excellent source of vitamin D, helping the body absorb this much-needed calcium to help maintain strong bones and reduce the risk of osteoporosis.

Source: Weber Shandwick Worldwide

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