

Boost your bones for Falls Awareness Week 2012

Taking steps to prevent falls and keep bones as strong as possible helps reduce the likelihood of breaking a bone as we get older. Answer the questions below to find out how much you know about bone health. You will find the answers in the information overleaf, but try not to cheat!

Bone is a living tissue.

- True?
- False?

At what age are our bones at their strongest?

- 5–10 years old
- 25–30 years old
- 60–65 years old

How many people in the UK have osteoporosis?

- 3,000
- 30,000
- 3 million

Who has a higher rate of bone tissue loss?

- Men
- Women

What is the recommended weekly amount of physical activity for older adults?

- 20 minutes
- 60 minutes
- 150 minutes

What type of exercise is good for maintaining healthy bones in later life?

- All types of exercise
- Weight-bearing exercise
- Aerobic exercise

By how much can regular participation in a strength and balance exercise class reduce the risk of falls?

- 10 per cent
- 25 per cent
- 50 per cent

Which is the best source of vitamin D?

- Water
- Sunlight

Vitamin D helps to absorb which of the following?

- Iron
- Calcium
- Zinc

Name five foods that you would find calcium in:

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For more information and advice on falls and bone health you can visit www.age.uk.org.uk/fallsweek

For details of your local Age UK and to find out what services they have on offer call **0800 169 65 65** or visit www.ageuk.org.uk



What can we do to keep our bones strong?

Understanding our bones

- Bone is a living tissue that continues to develop even after we stop growing in height.
- Our bones reach their maximum density, or become strongest, around the age of 30. After the age of approximately 35, bone strength naturally deteriorates as part of the ageing process. For some people they can eventually become quite fragile and break easily following a minor bump or fall. This condition is known as osteoporosis.
- An estimated 3 million people in the UK have osteoporosis, a condition that is more prevalent in women.
- Women have a higher rate of bone tissue loss than men, particularly because of the menopause.

Getting enough exercise?

- Older adults over the age of 65 are recommended to do 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity a week. This can be anything that makes you feel warmer and breathe slightly harder than usual, and can be done in bouts of ten minutes or more. In addition to this, the Government recommends two weekly sessions of strength and balance exercises, many of which are also weight-bearing and help to maintain strong bones.
- Weight-bearing exercise is one of the best ways to maintain strong bones. This is any kind of physical activity that you do while you're on your feet, which works your muscles and bones against gravity.

Weight-bearing exercises include:

- brisk walking
- dancing
- tai chi
- climbing stairs
- jogging
- playing tennis or badminton.

- For those at greater risk of falls, a tailored strength and balance exercise class, is a more appropriate form of exercise. These classes include what are known as Otago or postural stability exercises, and can reduce the risk of falls by as much as 50 per cent.

Vitamin D and calcium

- About 90 per cent of our vitamin D is normally obtained from sunlight, although it is also found in some foods. We should all aim to get 10–15 minutes of sun exposure to our face and arms without sunscreen around lunchtime, every day, between May to September, taking care not to burn.

Anyone at risk of not getting enough vitamin D, particularly if they are unable to go outdoors regularly, avoid sunshine or cover up for religious or cultural reasons, should speak to their GP about vitamin D supplements.

- Vitamin D helps our bodies to absorb calcium, a key component of bone tissue, that can be found in milk and dairy foods such as cheese and yoghurt, fortified soya products and canned fish (if you mash in the bones). It is found in lesser amounts in green leafy vegetables, baked beans, lentils, white bread, fortified breakfast cereals and some nuts, such as almonds.