

Five Super Foods for Keeping your Bones Healthy



A strong skeletal frame is vital not only to provide structure to the body but also protect the internal organs and anchor the muscles.

Apart from this, a healthy set of bones is crucial for good posture, balance and strength. Now the two key nutrients responsible for developing healthy strong bones are calcium and phosphorus. Smaller amounts of other nutrients like vitamins, proteins and minerals are also important for healthy bones.

The process of developing healthy bones begins at birth. However, it is important that a healthy, bone-friendly diet programme is maintained all throughout the life. This becomes particularly important after about 30 years of age.

You of course have the option of going for calcium supplements (but do consult a doctor before you do that), you can also try some calcium-rich foods to make up for the deficiency of calcium and keeping the bones healthy. Below, we discuss five super foods which can help you boost your bone density at any age:



Milk

Without a shadow of doubt, milk is the best (and readily available) source of calcium required for proper bone growth. According to the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), low fat or fat-free milk is the best choice as it has high calcium content without the added fat and this facilitates easy absorption of calcium by the body. And it's not just calcium. Milk is also rich in nutrients like potassium, magnesium, riboflavin, phosphorus and Vitamins D, A and B12, all of which are important for healthy bones.



Orange Juice

Oranges are packed with essential nutrients like vitamins, minerals and calcium. They are a must-have for healthy bone growth. They can be especially used by individuals who have intolerance to lactose and cannot obtain their daily calcium requirements from dairy products. So next time you help yourself with a serving of fruits, make sure you have enough oranges in that.



Dairy Products

Many experts have designated dairy products like cheese and yogurt as preferred source of calcium due to their high calcium levels. In case you are lactose intolerant, you can also opt for other dairy products that are either lactose-free or have low levels of lactose. Yogurt contains a chemical called lactoferrin which is an iron-binding protein which promotes the growth and activity of osteoblasts (the cells that build bones).



Nuts and Seeds

Besides being rich in calcium, nuts like walnuts, flaxseeds, almonds, pistachios etc are also very good sources of minerals and omega 3 fatty acids. Peanuts and calcium contain potassium which prevents loss of calcium in urine.



Greens

Dark green leafy veggies like brocolli and spinach are great sources of calcium and vitamin D and it's the latter which helps in absorption of Calcium and Phosphorus, thereby ensuring growth of healthy bones and teeth. Collards and turnip greens can also be helpful in providing you with your daily dose of calcium. The alkaline effect of eating a diet rich in these vegetables will help you to strengthen your bones and promote bone growth by preventing calcium loss. Besides, plant sterols (steroid hormones) are converted to a hormone called calciferol and that aids calcium absorption.