Healthy Eating to Stay Strong

A healthy diet and regular weight bearing or resistance exercise can help to build and maintain strong bones and muscles. Muscles are important for daily activities such as walking and even getting out of a chair!

**Do you have three to four serves of calcium rich foods every day?** □ Yes □ No

Calcium helps to keep your bones strong, and prevent fractures & osteoporosis.

Daily calcium requirements are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>19-70yrs</th>
<th>&gt;70yrs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>1000mg</td>
<td>1300mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-50yrs &lt; 50yrs</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>1000mg</td>
<td>1300mg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To achieve this intake, you need **three to four serves** of calcium-rich foods each day.

One serve is:
- 250ml (1 cup) of milk
- 250ml (1 cup) calcium fortified soy milk
- 40g or 2 slices of hard cheese
- 200g of yoghurt
- 1 cup of custard
- 100g of tinned salmon or sardines (with the bones!)

Ask your GP about any need for supplements.

**Do you know your Vitamin D level?** □ Yes □ No

Ask your GP to check your Vitamin D level. Being deficient in Vitamin D can affect your bone and muscle strength as this vitamin helps our bodies to absorb calcium from food. To get enough sunlight for your body to make vitamin D, your skin (face and arms or legs) need to be exposed to direct sunlight for **about 15 minutes 5-6 times a week**. Take care between 11am – 3pm in the summer months (daylight saving time) because of the risks of sunburn and skin cancer.

**Do you eat three regular meals everyday?** □ Yes □ No

Your body can start to break down muscles for energy if you regularly skip meals or only eat small amounts. If you have a small appetite, eat small meals and snacks more frequently. If meal preparation is difficult, consider home-delivered meal services or join local lunch groups at community centres. Make use of convenience food products, or cook in bulk and freeze meals for another day. If you have lost your appetite or have difficulty with swallowing or chewing, talk to your GP about seeing a Dietitian or Speech Pathologist.

**Is your weight stable and healthy?** □ Yes □ No

Weight loss is **not** a normal part of ageing and usually means you are losing muscles as well. This can increase your risk of falling and weaken your bones. If you are eating poorly and you experience sudden or gradual unplanned weight loss, you should speak to your GP. A referral to a Dietitian may be helpful.
Do you have at least 2 serves of protein such as meat, chicken, fish, eggs or legumes most days? □ Yes □ No

Protein-rich foods, as well as exercise, can help build muscles which are important for balance, strength and protect your bones if you have a fall. Try to have protein at every meal as this promotes muscle growth.

One serve is:
- 100g of raw meat, minced meat, poultry (about the size of your palm)
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup legumes
- 100g Tinned fish or fillet of fish
- 30g nuts

Dairy products are also good sources of easy-to-digest proteins and provide other valuable nutrients

Do you eat fruit and vegetables every day? □ Yes □ No

These foods provide fibre, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants which keep your body in good health and are important for regular bowels.

You should aim to have two serves of fruit each day.
One serve is:
- 1 medium piece of fruit
- 2 small pieces of fruit
- 1 cup of chopped or canned fruit

You should aim to have five serves of vegetables each day.
One serve is:
- ½ cup cooked vegetables
- 1 medium potato
- 1 cup salad or raw vegetables

Do you drink plenty of fluids (1.5-2 litres) per day? □ Yes □ No

Drink regularly, even before you feel thirsty. Dehydration, especially in hot weather can happen very quickly and can cause confusion, dizziness and increase the risk of a fall. You need around 6-8 glasses of fluid daily; fluids do not have to be only water. If you are eating poorly or losing weight, choose nourishing fluids such as milkshakes, smoothies, milky coffee (e.g. lattes), fruit juice and soup.

Is it difficult to shop, cook and feed yourself? □ Yes □ No

If you have difficulties preparing or shopping for food, contact Commonwealth Care Link on 1800 052 222 (Freecall) for help. Your local Meals on Wheels can assist you with meal delivery. Phone the NSW Meals on Wheels Association on (02) 8219 4200 to find your local Meals on Wheels.