

Lunch at the Library's HEALTH TIP OF THE WEEK



This healthy tip of the week was adapted from "KidsHealth from Nemours," kidshealth.org/en/parents/strong-bones.html. For more tips, visit kernlibrary.org or kidshealth.org.

3 Ways to Build Strong Bones

It's easy to take our bones for granted. After all, they do all their work behind the scenes! But when a bone breaks, it's a big deal. Bones take time to heal, even for kids and having strong bones in childhood lays a foundation for bone health throughout life. We build almost all our bone density when we're children and teens. The bone-building process is mostly finished around age 20. As adults, we still replace old bone with new bone, but more slowly. Over time, our bones get weaker. Kids with strong bones have a better chance of avoiding bone weakness later in life. As a parent, you can help by making sure kids get the three key ingredients for healthy bones: calcium, vitamin D, and exercise.

1. CALCIUM

Calcium is a mineral that's known for building healthy bones. It's found in dairy products, beans, some nuts and seeds, and leafy green vegetables.

2. VITAMIN D

Vitamin D helps the body absorb calcium. But most kids don't eat many foods that contain vitamin D. Because vitamin D is so important, health care providers recommend all kids take a vitamin D supplement if they don't get enough in their diet. Even babies need to take vitamin D unless they're drinking at least 32 ounces of formula per day.

3. EXERCISE

Our muscles get stronger the more we use them. The same is true for bones. Weight-bearing activities like walking, running, jumping, and climbing are especially good for building bone. They use the force of our muscles and gravity to put pressure on our bones. The pressure makes the body build up stronger bone.



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