

Health In Progress

Lesson 24

Calcium and Bones



QUESTION 24:

TRUE OR FALSE

It is important to pay attention to calcium intake in the teenage years because this has an important relationship to bone health in adulthood.

ANSWER: True

1. **Calcium intake in the teenage years has an important relationship to bone health in adulthood.**

Peak Bone Mass is the maximum amount of bony tissue you will have in your life. The rate of bone mass accumulation (how quickly you are making bone) is greatest in middle school years and teens.

When we age, we naturally lose bone mass. If an individual has a low bone mass to begin with, they are more likely to develop the condition osteoporosis. **Osteoporotic bone is weak** and unable to withstand stress, which causes fractures. Such fractures can occur in any bone; commonly they occur in the spine and can cause increasing curvature.

2. What are the main ways that you can maximize your bone health now and for later in life?

a. **Exercise!**

b. **Make sure that you get enough calcium in your diet.** Your bones are made up of one-third collagen (*a type of protein*), and the other two-thirds as minerals including calcium and phosphorus. In the United States, it is relatively easy to obtain adequate intake of protein and phosphorus to ensure healthy bones. Assuring calcium intake adequate for attaining peak bone mass is more difficult!

3. **Dairy products are the main source of calcium in U.S. diets.** If you drink **3 cups of milk a day** or the equivalent amount in the form of other dairy products, you should get adequate calcium. Some individuals cannot or prefer not to eat dairy products. That is OK, as long as they get enough calcium. If you prefer not to eat dairy products, look closely at the table, Non-Dairy Food Sources of Calcium. Also remember to look for products that are low-fat or non-fat

4. **Remember to choose lower or non-fat dairy products.** These types of dairy products provide the same nutrition, but have fewer calories and fats. If you drink whole milk, it is better to ease gradually down to 2%, then to 1% or skim milk.