

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Employee blog – Musculoskeletal health

The following health and wellbeing blog has been prepared by TAL for use by partner employers for their employees. It is available to use in white-label format for communications and is designed to provide information for employees on positive ways to support their physical health.

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Supporting good bone health

As we get older our bone density naturally decreases, for most people this isn't a problem, but for some people with significantly decreased bone mineral density and bone mass it can make the bones weaker and at increased risk of fractures. This is called osteoporosis. If you'd like to know more, our life insurance partner [TAL](#), has provided some useful guidance on the steps you can take to avoid osteoporosis.

Osteoporosis is very common; it's estimated that over 900,000 Australians currently have osteoporosis. It's more common in women than men, and over 1 in 4 women aged over 75 years have osteoporosis.

Up to around age 30, bone mineral density and bone mass increases. It remains stable for around 20 years before starting to decrease in later years².

Why is it different for women?

Several milestones in women's lives can impact on bone health and dietary requirements. Pregnancy and breast feeding are times of increased calcium requirements as the body is working to meet the requirements of the growing baby. During menopause as oestrogen levels decrease there's a corresponding decrease in bone mass and density².

What can we do to optimise our bone health?

Calcium and vitamin D are very important for bone health. Low levels of vitamin D can result in impaired calcium absorption and loss of bone density. Calcium and vitamin D can be found in many dietary sources and sun exposure is an important source of vitamin D².

What foods can boost calcium and vitamin D intake?

A good source of dietary calcium can come from dairy food such as milk, yoghurt and cheese. One serving of each of these typically contains up to around 300mg of calcium. Other sources of calcium include dark green vegetables, nuts, breads and cereals. Some foods, such as cereals, soy products and fruit juices are fortified with calcium and vitamin D.

Vitamin D and the sun

The sun is the main source of vitamin D for most Australians. Only limited exposure is needed to produce sufficient levels of vitamin D and it's important to balance the need for exposure with the

risk of sun damage. The Cancer Council recommends when the UV index is 3 or above, sun protection is required when outside for more than a few minutes.

Exercise and bone health

Exercise that is weight-bearing and resistance training are most beneficial for bone health. These types of exercises help to reduce the rate of bone loss, conserve bone tissue, lower the risk of fractures and falls and increase muscle strength in older people.

Whatever your age or life stage you can make simple lifestyle changes to optimise your bone health in the future. Make the change today.

1. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, [Chronic musculoskeletal conditions](#)
2. [Health Bones Australia](#)

Important information

The health information contained in this document is not a substitute for advice from a qualified medical or other health professional. It is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any health problem. Always consult your medical practitioner or other health professional in relation to any medical issue or concern, before changing your diet, starting an exercise program, or taking medication or supplements of any kind. While all care has been taken to ensure that the information provided is accurate and complete at the date of publication, neither TAL nor its employees accept liability for any loss or damage caused as a result of reliance on the information.

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