

The UConn Buzz



Keep Your Bones Healthy

Bone health is a cornerstone of overall wellness, particularly as we age. Bones support our body, protect vital organs, and store crucial minerals. Yet, many adults underestimate the importance of maintaining bone strength until problems arise, such as osteoporosis or fractures. Keep your bones healthy and resilient throughout life.

Nutritional Essentials

[Calcium and vitamin D](#) are vital for bone health. Adults need around 1,000–1,200 mg of calcium daily, which can be found in dairy products, leafy greens, almonds, and fortified foods. Vitamin D helps your body absorb calcium, with sunlight being a primary source. Aim for 600–800 IU of vitamin D per day, or consider supplements if sun exposure is limited. Small fish, like canned sardines, are a great source of both calcium and Vitamin D.

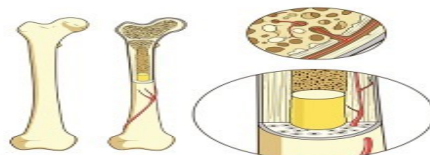
Magnesium and vitamin K also play a role in bone strength, aiding calcium utilization and bone mineralization.

Regular Exercise

Weight-bearing exercises, such as walking, dancing, or jogging, and resistance training with weights or bands help build and maintain bone density. Even moderate activities like yoga or tai chi improve balance, reducing the risk of falls and fractures. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate activity each week and incorporate strength training twice weekly.

Lifestyle Choices

Smoking and excessive alcohol weaken bones. Limiting alcohol to moderate levels and avoiding tobacco can significantly improve bone health. Additionally, a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and lean proteins supports bone repair and regeneration. “Drinking more than three cups of coffee every day may interfere with calcium absorption and cause bone loss.” ([Bone Health and Osteoporosis Foundation](#))



Monitoring and Prevention

Adults, especially women post-menopause and men over 50, should consider bone density testing to identify early signs of [osteoporosis](#). “A bone mineral density (BMD) test measures calcium and other minerals in bone. Bones containing more minerals are denser, so they tend to be stronger and less likely to break.” ([NIH](#)) Osteoporosis is a disease you typically do not have symptoms, and you may not even know you have the disease until you break a bone. If diagnosed with osteoporosis, medications and lifestyle changes can slow bone loss.

Bone health is a lifelong investment. By staying active, eating a nutrient-rich diet, and adopting healthy habits, you can reduce the risk of bone-related issues and enjoy a strong, active life well into your later years. Don’t wait—start strengthening your bones today!

Sources: [Mayo Clinic](#), [NIH](#)

HAPPENINGS AROUND TOWN

Winter Welcome, December 7th from 4-6:30 PM in Downtown Storrs, Join the Mansfield Downtown Partnership in celebrating the start of the new season at our 12th Annual Winter Welcome! We invite residents and friends of all ages to join in the free, frosty fun. Winter Welcome is free and open to everyone! For more information: [Winter](#)

Candy Cane Sprint, December 14 in Columbia. 2.5 miler will start and end at the Columbia Recreation Park. Address: 55 Hennequin Road, Columbia CT 06237. For more information: [Candy Cane](#)

The King of Pain 10-Miler, February 11, 9:00am in Glastonbury. "In 2004, a legend was born. The King of Pain is the toughest road race in the history of Glastonbury and, as anyone who has run it knows, it lives up to its name. The course offers breathtaking South Glastonbury orchard scenery, along with hill, after hill, after hill. ..And you'll be pretty sore after you finish, but you'll walk away with bragging rights that will last all year long". For more information: [King of Pain](#)

Sautéed Kale with Craisins,

6 Servings

INGREDIENTS:

2 bunches fresh kale, rinsed

2 cloves garlic, chopped

2 T vegetable oil

¼ cup craisins (can substitute raisins)

¼ cup sliced or slivered almonds



DIRECTIONS

1. In a large skillet, heat oil and add garlic; sauté for 2 – 3 minutes
2. Take bunches of rinsed kale and cut into inch strips
3. Add kale to skillet and stir into garlic; add ¼ cup water, cover and cook for 5 minutes on medium heat.
4. Add craisins and almonds; mix well and serve

Dehydration in the Winter: A Hidden Risk

When we think of dehydration, summer heat often comes to mind. Staying hydrated in the winter is just as important. Cold weather can mask the signs of dehydration, and reduced thirst sensation during winter can make it harder to recognize when your body needs water.

Why Dehydration Happens in Winter

- **Dry Air:** Heated indoor environments and cold, dry outdoor air can increase water loss through your skin and breath.
- **Reduced Thirst:** In colder temperatures, your body may suppress thirst, leading to dehydration.

- **Winter Activities:** Activities like skiing, snowboarding, and even shoveling snow can cause you to sweat, even if you don't feel hot.
- **Layering:** Wearing multiple layers of clothing can increase sweat production, which might go unnoticed in cool weather.

Common signs of winter dehydration are: dry skin, fatigue, dizziness, or darker urine. In children and older adults, dehydration can be more subtle but equally serious.

Tips to Stay Hydrated

- **Drink Regularly:** Even if you don't feel thirsty, aim to drink water throughout the day. Herbal teas and warm water with lemon are great options for winter.

- **Monitor Intake:** Keep a water bottle handy as a visual reminder to sip frequently.
- **Eat Water-Rich Foods:** Soups, stews, and fruits like oranges and apples contribute to hydration.
- **Avoid Overdoing Caffeine and Alcohol:** These can have dehydrating effects.

By making hydration a priority year-round, you support your overall health and keep your body functioning at its best.

Source: [Mass General](#), [AHA](#), [NIH](#)

Be Well is an employee wellness program provided through the Eastern Highlands Health District with funding from The CT Department of Health. The goal of the program is to make the healthy choice the easy

