



Released: 10/15/2004

Surgeon General's Report on Bone Health

The Surgeon General released a Report on Osteoporosis and Bone Health stating that most Americans do not consume the recommended level of calcium but reaching this level is feasible by consuming three servings of low-fat milk each day.

With more than one in 10 Americans either diagnosed with or at risk of developing a bone disease, the report recommends lifestyle changes for all Americans – through regular physical activity and consumption of calcium- and vitamin D-rich foods, such as milk, cheese and yogurt, each day.

"It is alarming that children today are at greater risk than ever before of growing up to become adults with osteoporosis," said Frank Greer, M.D., speaking on behalf of the American Academy of Pediatrics. "Preventing osteoporosis is surprisingly straightforward - along with regular physical activity, kids and adults should eat a balanced diet that includes at least three servings of calcium-rich lowfat milk, cheese or yogurt each day to help build stronger bones to last a lifetime."

Milk and other dairy foods supply 73 percent of the calcium found in the nation's food supply. The important benefits of diets rich in calcium, especially from dairy foods, in disease prevention and bone health have long been recognized. In recent years, scientists have learned more about how vitamin D, most commonly found in dairy foods, helps the body absorb and deposit calcium into bones and teeth. A number of studies have linked decreased milk consumption and increased soft drink consumption to a rise in rickets and fractures among adolescents.

"It's been said that osteoporosis is a pediatric disease with geriatric consequences," said Serena Ball, MS, RD, National Dairy Council. "For prevention to really work, parents need to start as early as possible in making sure their kids get enough calcium and other nutrients through three servings of dairy a day. It can be as simple as having your kids eat cereal with milk for breakfast, yogurt with lunch and string cheese for a snack."

The Surgeon General's Report reaffirms the link between milk, cheese and yogurt and strong bones. Health professionals recommend that Americans get three to four servings of dairy foods daily – to help prevent osteoporosis and reduce the

risk of hypertension. There are a number of resources to provide more information on bone health:

- National Dairy Council www.nationaldairycouncil.org
- * 3-A-Day for Stronger Bones www.3aday.org
- * CDC's National Bone Health Campaign
www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/bonehealth/index.htm
- * National Osteoporosis Foundation www.nof.org
- * Surgeon General's Report on Bone Health
www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/bonehealth
- * Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005
<http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines>
- * NIH – Osteoporosis and Other Related Bone Diseases National Resource Center www.osteoporosis.gov
- "The tragedy of osteoporosis is that it's largely avoidable," said Robert P. Heaney, MD, Creighton University, Osteoporosis Research Center. "One of the most important things you can do is to get adequate amounts of calcium and vitamin D in your diet. Eating three serving of milk and milk products a day is one of the best ways to do that."