



# STRONG MUSCLES AND BONES



Government of South Australia  
SA Health

**Being active, having enough vitamin D and eating the right foods are all important to help us stay healthy, keep our bones and muscles strong and our brain working well.**

## Physical activity

Be active for at least 30 minutes most days. Activity keeps your muscles and joints working well. Weight-bearing exercise, like walking, is a good way to keep your bones strong.

## Vitamin D

You need Vitamin D for muscles to work well. It also helps the body use calcium to keep your bones strong and your brain working well. Sunshine on your skin for about 10 minutes a day, early morning or late afternoon will boost your Vitamin D (see Cancer Council website on back page).

Foods that have Vitamin D include oily fish, fortified foods and liver.

It can be hard to get enough Vitamin D from sunshine. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you think you might need calcium or Vitamin D tablets.

## The right foods

A balanced diet gives you the energy to enjoy life and look after yourself.

For most people, the list below is the smallest amount needed each day for a healthy diet.



- > **Protein** keeps muscles strong and gives you energy – eat 2 serves of foods that are high in protein (1 serve is 120g meat, chicken or fish, 2 eggs or ½ cup cooked beans or ⅓ cup nuts).
- > **Calcium** keeps your bones strong – eat 3-4 serves of foods that are high in calcium (1 serve is equal to 250ml of fresh milk, 200ml yoghurt or 40g cheese. Other sources are soy milk with added calcium, sardines and salmon with bones).
- > **Fruit** – eat 2 pieces.
- > **Vegetables** – eat 5 serves (1 serve is ½ cup of cooked vegetables).
- > **Wholegrain** – breads and cereals, eat 4-5 serves (1 serve is 1 slice of bread or 1/2 cup cooked rice, pasta or 2/3 cup flaked cereal).
- > **Fluid** – drink at least 6 cups (250ml / 8 fluid ounces) of fluid of any kind (not alcohol), unless you are advised by your doctor.





## What can you do about problems you have with food or eating?

Older people should avoid losing weight, unless advised by a health professional.

- > **Illness**, feeling down and some medicines can make you feel like not eating. Talk to your doctor, particularly if you are losing weight without trying.
- > **Poor appetite**. Keep active and eat small meals more often, with snacks in between, like yoghurt, cheese and crackers.
- > **Cannot shop**. Home services, some supermarkets and online stores offer home delivery.
- > **Trouble** getting food ready or feeding yourself. Pre-made meals can be delivered. Ask your local council, health professional or the Seniors Information Service about these services. See an occupational therapist.
- > **Chewing food is difficult**. Your dentist may be able to help if this is because of tooth or gum problems.
- > **Swallowing is difficult**. Also you sometimes cough, choke or splutter when eating or drinking. See a speech pathologist.

## Who can help?

- > **Your Doctor** for concerns about your weight, diet or exercise. Your doctor can refer you to other health professionals or any services you may be eligible for.
- > **Dietitians** can help improve your diet [www.daa.asn.au](http://www.daa.asn.au)
- > **Physiotherapists** or exercise physiologists can help you with activity.
- > To find health professionals near you, phone **Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre 1800 052 222**, or look in the Yellow Pages
- > **Dentists** can help if your teeth are making it difficult to eat.
- > **Catalyst Foundation** (formerly Seniors Information Services): (08) 8168 8776  
Country callers 1800 636 368
- > **Osteoporosis Australia**: information on bone health (toll free) 1800 242 141
- > **Cancer Council Helpline**: information about safe sun exposure 13 11 20 or [www.cancer.org.au/preventing-cancer/sun-protection/vitamin-d/how-much-sun-is-enough.html](http://www.cancer.org.au/preventing-cancer/sun-protection/vitamin-d/how-much-sun-is-enough.html)
- > **Local Council**: information on shopping assistance and home support.

## For more information

**Adelaide area:** Call 1300 0 FALLS (1300 0 32557) for information about falls prevention services that are close to you.

**Country SA:** Please contact your local health service for information about services close to you. You can also email the Country Health Falls Prevention coordinator at [Health.CHSAFallsPreventionProject@sa.gov.au](mailto:Health.CHSAFallsPreventionProject@sa.gov.au)

[sahealth.sa.gov.au/falls](http://sahealth.sa.gov.au/falls)

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\*SA Health Partnering with Consumers and Community Advisory Group



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