

Calvary Community Care Strong Muscles and Bones

Falls and Injury Prevention – How not to fall for it



Want to be healthy, keep your bones and muscles strong and your brain working well?

Try being active, have enough Vitamin D and eat the right foods.

Aim to be active for at least 30 minutes per day which will help keep your muscles and joints working well. Weight bearing exercise such as weights or walking is a good way to keep the bones strong. A balanced diet gives you the energy to enjoy life and look after yourself.



Physical Activity

Evidence shows that several different types of exercise programs reduce both the rate of falls and the risk of falling in older people living in the community. Some examples:

- **Home-based balance and strength training (e.g. the Otago Exercise Programme):** The Otago Exercise Programme is an individually prescribed home exercise program comprising balance retraining, lower limb muscle strengthening and walking components.
- **Group-based tai chi:** Originally developed as a martial art, Tai Chi is a means of keeping fit, preventing and curing diseases. Its prime purpose today is to promote health in a slow relaxed manner, without jarring and hurting the body. The movements are slow, with great emphasis on posture and balance. The exercise

requires a high degree of concentration, with the mind free of distractions. The learning and regular practice of Tai Chi can:

- » Stimulate the mind, improving concentration, focus and co-ordination,
 - » Increase levels of fitness and muscle tone,
 - » Keep the joints flexible,
 - » Stimulate the circulation of the blood,
 - » Improve the function of the internal organs,
 - » Enhance the function of the central nervous system,
 - » Promote a general sense of well-being.
- **Other group or individual exercise programs:** Exercise programs that challenge balance and include frequent exercise reduce fall rates more than programs without these features.



Vitamin D supplementation

There is clear evidence for the benefits of Vitamin D in preventing fractures, as it helps the body use calcium to keep bones strong, and nerves and muscles working well.

Ways to increase your levels of Vitamin D:

- Sunshine on your skin for about 10 minutes a day (early morning or late afternoon)
- Foods containing Vitamin D e.g. oily fish, liver, fortified foods (any food, e.g. cereal, that has essential nutrients such as for example, iron and vitamins, added, either in quantities greater than those present normally, i.e. supplementation, or which are not normally present in the food being fortified)

It can be difficult to get enough Vitamin D from sunshine so ask your doctor or pharmacist if they think you need Vitamin D or calcium 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 1/2 cup cooked beans or 1/3 cup nuts).

Calcium keeps your bones strong – eat 3-4 serves of foods that are high in calcium (1 serve is equal to 250ml milk, 200ml yoghurt or 30g cheese. Other sources are soy milk with added calcium, sardines and salmon with bones.)

Vegetables – eat 5 serves (1 serve is 1/2 cup of cooked vegetables). **Fruit** – eat 2 pieces.

Wholegrain breads and cereals.

Fluid – drink at least 6 cups (250ml / 8 fluid ounces = 1 cup) of fluid of any kind (not alcohol), unless you are on a fluid restriction as advised by your doctor.

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

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 get food or feed yourself	Speak with your CCC local office. Some supermarkets and online stores offer home delivery (charges apply). Pre-made meals can be delivered. Ask your local council, health professional or the 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	If you sometimes cough, choke or splutter when eating or drinking. See a speech pathologist.

Need support? Calvary Community Care can support safe, independent living at home with a variety of services and expert advice. Call 1300 66 00 22 for more information.

Who can help?

GP can discuss concerns about your weight, diet or exercise.

Dietician or Nutritionist can give advice as to how to improve your diet.

Meals on Wheels can provide nourishing three course meals delivered to the door by friendly volunteers.

<http://mealsonwheels.org.au/> or ph. 1800854453

Physiotherapist can help you find suitable activities.

Exercise physiologists specialise in the benefits of exercise to help patients get fitter for all around good health, or to treat patients with a medical condition through exercise. They are not personal trainers. They study at university and have a wide range of knowledge about the human body and the benefit that exercise has on it, both mentally and physically.

Community Health Centres and Day Therapy Centres can offer physiotherapy and various other allied health services.

Dentist can assist if you have problems with your teeth or dentures making it difficult to eat.

Speech Pathologists/Therapists can assist people who experience difficulties swallowing food and drinking safely.

Cancer Council for information on safe sun exposure.

<http://www.cancer.org.au/> or ph. 131120

My Aged Care gives you access to a range of information and support which can be delivered to you in your home. It is for people 65yrs+, or 50yrs+ for an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.

www.myagedcare.gov.au or ph. 1800 200 422.

Yellow Pages may assist you in finding health professionals in your area.

Local Council for information on shopping assistance and home support.

Libraries often have information on activities available in your local area.

References

Preventing Falls and Harm from Falls in Older People

'Best Practice Guidelines for Australian Community Care 2009'

<http://bit.ly/2o3AJZv>

Tai Chi and Chi Gung Institute

'What is Tai Chi?'

<http://taichi.com.au/taichi.html#1>

SA Falls and Fall Injury Prevention Fact Sheet 1

'Strong Muscles and Bones'

<http://bit.ly/2oSw8qi>

Revised and re-published by the Commonwealth of Australia 2011

'Don't Fall For It - A guide to preventing falls for older people'

<http://bit.ly/2ovW0vz>

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