



## February/March Support Group Leaders Curriculum

### **February: Love Your Bones**

Valentine's Day is quickly approaching. As everyone knows, February 14 is traditionally a day to celebrate romantic love. Whether gifts are shared in the form of roses, wine or fine jewelry, it's an annual ritual to express love and admiration. The National Osteoporosis Foundation (NOF) would like to remind everyone that in order to be one's best for your significant other, it's important to stay strong and healthy all year round. This Valentine's Day, NOF proposes that everyone should Love Your Bones!

### **Indulge Your Loved One with a Bone Strong Breakfast**

Express your adoration by serving your better half a bone healthy breakfast. Here are three NOF favorites guaranteed to show you care.

- These silver dollar-sized [Ricotta Pancakes](#) are lighter than regular pancakes and pair wonderfully well with jam, maple syrup or fresh berries.
- [Gingered Salmon Croquettes](#) are delightfully crunchy and the perfect blend of savory and subtle sweetness.
- A cinch to make, [Scrambled Eggs with Dates](#) are sinfully good. Serve with a side of multigrain toast.

### **Bone Healthy Valentine's Day Chocolate Treats**

Chocolate is revered as an edible declaration of love. Take care of your bone health while indulging in these sweet treats.

- [Bittersweet Chocolate Loaf Cake](#) is moist, full of flavor and simply delicious.
- You've got to taste these [Black Bean Brownies](#)! You will never believe that black beans are a main ingredient.
- These bite-sized [Almond Stuffed Prunes in Chocolate](#) are sure to become a year-round, sweet-tooth treat.

### **Spend Time Together Exercising**

While we often think that fitness is about the individual, if you exercise with the one you love, you may discover how doing so enhances your relationship. Daily exercise regimes can include activities like weight lifting, couples yoga, dancing or jogging. Of course, during the COVID-19 pandemic, safety protocols must always be practiced. Visit <https://www.nof.org/patients/treatment/exercisesafe-movement/> to learn more and have fun coming up with an exercise plan. Remember that it takes two to tango!

### **Keep Your Good Health Top of Mind So You Can Share Your Love**

While the pandemic has impacted so many aspects of our lives, it is critical to stay on top of your good health. Please be sure to not neglect your medical appointments. As you most likely know, many healthcare professionals are conducting visits via telemedicine. Please visit <https://www.nof.org/news/covid-19-updates-and-resources/> and check out *Ask the Expert: Dr. Lewiecki Shares Invaluable Insight on Best Telemedicine Practices During the Pandemic*. It provides invaluable insight. We want you to stay bone healthy so that you can continue living your best life and spreading your love.

## **March: Spring into National Nutrition Month**

March is National Nutrition Month and no better time to remind everyone about the bone health virtues of calcium and vitamin D. And, the first day of spring, March 20, is primetime to get outside – practicing COVID-19 precautions – for some fresh air and sunshine.

### **Calcium and Vitamin D**

Calcium and vitamin D are absolutely essential to building strong, dense bones when you're young and to keeping them healthy as you age. They are the two most important nutrients for bone health.

Calcium is a mineral that is critically necessary not only for bone health but also for enabling our blood to clot, muscles to contract and heart to beat. An estimated 99 percent of calcium in our bodies is in the bones and teeth. Every day, we lose this essential mineral through skin, nails, hair, sweat, urine and feces. Our bodies do not produce calcium. This is why it is an absolute “must” to get enough of this mineral by carefully selecting the foods that we eat. When we don't get the calcium our body needs, it is taken from our bones. This is fine once in a while but if it happens too often, bones weaken and are broken more easily.

Your body needs vitamin D to absorb calcium. If you do not get enough vitamin D, you are at greater risk of bone loss and broken bones. You can get small amounts of vitamin D from a few foods, such as fortified milk, liver and fatty fish (e.g., wild mackerel, salmon, sardines and tuna). Your skin can make vitamin D from the sun, but getting too much sun can be harmful, and sunscreen blocks out vitamin D.

NOF's [Calcium and Vitamin D](#) overview shares excellent information on the importance of these vital nutrients in addition to how much you need, what the best sources are and details about supplements.

[Your Guide to a Bone Healthy Diet](#) is another valuable calcium and vitamin D primer.

### **Exercise**

Now that your body is pumped with key nutrients, it's time to spring into action. There are plenty of bone healthy exercises that you can do outside and get a bit of much-needed vitamin D. Think about options like hiking, jumping rope and tennis.

As indicated earlier, please visit the [Exercise and Safe Movement](#) section of our site to learn about weight-bearing and muscle-strengthening exercises as well as preventing falls. In addition, everyone should be reminded that there are things that one can do to promote good posture, strength, movement, flexibility and balance. Check out [Osteoporosis Exercise Examples](#) to learn more.

Please seek counsel from your healthcare professional before beginning any new exercise routine. Once you've gotten the green light, determine [how much exercise you need](#) to kick off your own personal regimen.

### **Call to Action: REMINDERS to Help Us Help You**

- **Please Join NOF's Patient Registry**  
[The Healthy Bones, Build Them for Life® Patient Registry](#), the first of its kind tool in the osteoporosis field, surveys patients and caregivers on an ongoing basis about how osteoporosis and low bone density impact their lives. This patient-reported information is collected anonymously, and then combined and analyzed by NOF to map out the patient journey. Please help NOF better help YOU by sharing your story so we can shape programs and campaigns with what patients need and want most. We have more than 900 participants so far, so please help us get to 1,000!
- **NOF's Voices of Osteoporosis: Stories of Hope and Inspiration**  
Our goal is to engage patients and caregivers to share their stories on living with osteoporosis in order to help others. If you are interested in working with us on this project, please send an email to [info@nof.org](mailto:info@nof.org). Please include “Voices of Osteoporosis” in the subject line and include a short paragraph (100 words) about your experience.