



March/April Support Group Leaders Curriculum

March is National Nutrition Month

- National Nutrition Month is a yearly initiative designed to teach Americans about the critical importance of making – and keeping – healthful eating habits.
- It provides the perfect platform for the Bone Health and Osteoporosis Foundation (BHOFF) to educate Americans of all ages – especially parents and their kids – about the importance of eating bone-healthy foods.
- It is critical to remember that diets high in calcium and vitamin D help ensure good bone development, growth, and preservation which leads to a lifetime of active living.

Positive, New Nutrition News for 2022

- Here's what The [National Institutes of Health](#) has to say: When parents think about their children's health, bones are not at the top of the list. But building strong bones in childhood and young adulthood is critical to help prevent osteoporosis and fractures later in life. Osteoporosis has been called “a childhood disease with old age consequences,” because the bone mass attained in childhood/adolescence is a significant determinant of one's long-term skeletal strength. In fact, peak bone mass – the greatest amount of bone an individual can attain – is reached in the late teens and early to mid-20s.
- A recent study in February's [PLOS Medicine](#) revealed that if a young female began eating optimally at age 20, she could increase her lifespan by just over 10 years. Similarly, a male could add 13 years to his life.

Healthy lifestyle guidelines can work in everyone's favor. Below are some simple daily to-dos:

- Let kids enjoy smoothies when on the go. They are loaded with nutrients, and those made with yogurt and milk have added protein, calcium, and vitamin D.
- If you or your family members are lactose intolerant, seek out vitamin D fortified milk alternatives, such as almond, soy, or rice milk – or the newest addition to the lactose-free family: oat milk.
- Sneak calcium-rich products into soups and stews when cooking.
- Be adventurous in the kitchen and encourage younger eaters to try new things. Purchase a copy of our BHOFF cookbook for new recipes: <https://store.nof.org/products/food-for-bones-cookbook>.
- Add more fish to your diet for good overall health. Salmon is a bone-healthy choice which is also great for cardiovascular and brain health.
- Involve your young chefs when meal planning. Kids are more likely to eat nutritious meals if they have been given a role in the food choices, grocery lists, shopping, and meal prepping.

Consuming Enough Calcium and Vitamin D are Key for Everybody

These two links share top-line information on calcium and vitamin D:

- BHOFF's [Calcium and Vitamin D](#) overview provides 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 useful calcium and vitamin D primer.

Ignore the Old “April Showers” Adage

According to Accuweather, the old saying “April showers bring May flowers” is a bit of folksy wisdom that we all once accepted as true. As a result, we think it rains a lot in April. The truth is the saying has more to do with proverbs than weather patterns. In terms of rain volume, April can actually be one of the driest months of the year! So please get outside for some sunshine and vitamin D.

And now that your body is pumped with key nutrients from March’s healthy hints, it’s time to spring into action. There are plenty of bone-strengthening exercises that you can do outside. Think about options like walking, jogging, hiking, jumping rope and tennis.

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.

Need Some Inspiration to Get Moving?

Check out this moving story, *When the Pro Becomes the Patient: The Accidental Advocate*, from BHOF’s Voices of Osteoporosis: Stories of Hope collection.

bonetalk.org/articles/when-the-pro-becomes-the-patient-the-accidental-advocate

Bone Health for the Cancer Survivor

Dr. Andrea Singer, BHOF’s Chief Medical Officer, shares an engaging and insightful discussion addressing bone health for the cancer survivor.

podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/beyond-the-ribbon/id1547503415

Grow Your Support Group Attendance

If you have an interesting guest host or are sharing information that would benefit many beyond your own Support Group, please let me know at ltumminello@bonehealthandosteoporosis.org. My colleague, Carina May (cmay@bonehealthandosteoporosis.org) and I would be happy to share it with other groups nationwide.

With the above in mind, this is posted on Shelly Gladstein’s OsteoBoston YouTube channel: Bone Quality: *9 Determinants of Bone Strength and Fragility*, starring bone health expert, Sara Meeks, youtube.com/watch?v=1y93bvAnHEY&t=1187s.

Here are two excellent resources from Ms. Meeks:

- Postural Correction Made Simple: bonehealthandosteoporosis.org/wp-content/uploads/1-C-Postural-Correction-Made-Simple...The-Meeks-Method.pdf
- The Re-Alignment Routine: bonehealthandosteoporosis.org/wp-content/uploads/4-Re-Alignment-Routine.pdf