

MEDIA RELEASE

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Outsmart osteoporosis and bolster joint health with dairy!

We all know that one mom who's a bit of an overachiever. She's on time, never looks frazzled and her kids always have something homemade (and objectively delicious) at the school bake sale. The quintessential Pinterest mom. Do you know who the Pinterest mom is of the food groups? Dairy. Think about it, dairy contains all three macronutrients as well as a host of micronutrients and beneficial bioactive compounds that all work synergistically together to give us health benefits. If that wasn't enough, dairy is versatile and downright delicious!

We need to take advantage of all these benefits. It's time to put this multi-functional food group to work in helping you to prevent age related bone loss and improve joint health. Maretha Vermaak, registered dietitian at Rediscover Dairy says: "Brittle bones and painful joints don't have to be part and parcel of getting older. In fact, although 60% of your peak bone mass is genetically determined, the remainder is determined by modifiable lifestyle factors. By making tweaks to these factors, you can positively influence bone and joint health."

The dairy food matrix

What makes dairy as a food group really interesting is that it is not a single food, it covers everything from cheese to frozen yoghurt. Each milk-based product is a combination of a number of nutrients in different forms. The whole really is greater than the sum of its parts as this combination (or dairy food matrix) exerts more benefits to muscle and bone health than any of its individual nutrients in isolation. It is also the food matrix that protects us from any of the detrimental nutrients found in dairy food products. For example, the assumed detrimental effects of saturated fats are modified when eaten as yoghurt or cheese. Basically, the food matrix enhances the good and dulls the bad.

Bone health

It's not something that we often think about, but our bones are living tissue. They are constantly being broken down and rebuilt. This is great news, because this means that while there is a window of opportunity to 'set the scene' for osteoporosis prevention in childhood and early adulthood (basically before the age of 30), it's never too late to make a change for the better.

Dairy foods contain more bone health nutrients per unit of energy than any other food group, essentially providing the raw materials for your bone structure. Calcium, inorganic phosphate and protein all work together with vitamin D (which we can get from the sun, some food sources and supplementation) to actively prevent age related bone loss.

Joint health

Dairy has long been associated with bone health, but the more we learn about the dairy food matrix, the more benefits we discover. One of these benefits include maintaining good joint health. Although there are a number of reasons why you may be experiencing joint pain, osteoarthritis is one of the most common causes. Osteoarthritis typically leads to degradation of the cartilage of the joint, changes in the bone shape forming bone spurs and an increased amount of inflammation. Once it sets in, you want to actively manage inflammation, strengthen the muscles surrounding the joint and prevent disease progression. Cue dairy products!

- Dairy foods are generally considered to be anti-inflammatory with the most consistent evidence centering around yoghurt with live cultures. Add some antioxidant rich whole fruit and nuts to the mix and you'll have a delicious, inflammation fighting breakfast in no time!
- When you pair dairy protein with appropriate resistance exercise, you have a winning recipe to strengthen your muscles and increase their mass. The stronger the muscles are supporting your joints, the less likely they are to misalign and get damaged further.
- Milk may also help prevent disease progression in women with knee osteoarthritis. Narrowing of the joint space is a sign that osteoarthritis is getting worse. The more milk women drank, the less their joint space narrowed.

How much dairy should we aim for?

Everyone should aim for 3-A-DAY™, that is three servings of dairy a day, as part of a healthy, balanced diet. When meeting this recommendation, you'll be getting a good dose of all the bone and joint healthy nutrients you need.

A single serving of dairy is:

- **1 glass (250ml) of milk or amasi**
- **2 small tubs (200ml) yoghurt**
- **2 slices or 2 tablespoons of grated (40g) cheese**



In combination with eating enough dairy, you also want to spend some sun-smart time outdoors to get vital vitamin D and get the right type of exercise regularly.

It's never too late to optimise your diet and make healthful changes to your lifestyle. Including more dairy foods in your diet is a delicious way to meet your daily recommendations and improve your health. As an added bonus, the healthier your habits are the more likely your kids will also start to incorporate these habits into their daily lives, setting them up for success as they age. Step over Pinterest mom, here we come!

For more information about dairy and bone health, visit www.rediscoverdairy.co.za

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