

[IMAGE]

Vitamin K for the Bones

By Editorial Staff

There are 206 bones in the human body, and as we age, our risk of breaking one or more of them increases. A bone break at any age can be a problem, but when we're older (and depending on the location of the break), it can severely limit our ability to perform daily activities. In some cases (e.g., a hip fracture), it can even prove deadly.

When we think of bone health, vitamin D and calcium usually come to mind – and for good reason. But there's another vitamin that can positively influence bone health, although it's too-often overlooked: *vitamin K*. Here's why vitamin K should be included in your bone-building regimen.

Vitamin K (specifically vitamin K1) reduces fracture risk, particularly the aforementioned problematic hip fractures. Among 1,400 older women (average age of 70 at the start of the study) tracked over a nearly 15-year period, women who consumed more than 100 micrograms of K1 (the equivalent of 1-2 servings of dark, leafy vegetables, the primary dietary sources of vitamin K) were *31 percent* less likely to suffer a fracture compared to women who consumed less than 60 micrograms per day.

In terms of the dreaded hip fractures, results were even more encouraging: Women with the highest vitamin K1 intake reduced their risk of hip-fracture-related hospitalization by almost *50 percent* compared to the women with lower K1 intake. Study findings appear in the research journal *Food & Function*. Of note, findings were independent of vitamin D status; that means how much vitamin D women did (or didn't) consume via diet and/or supplements did not influence findings.

Dietary sources of vitamin K, in addition to dark, leafy vegetables such as kale, spinach, broccoli, collard greens, etc., include fermented soybeans, soybean and canola oil, with small amounts present in meat, cheese and eggs. Vitamin K supplements are also available. Always talk to your doctor before taking any dietary supplement, particularly if you are also taking medication.

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