



This document is meant to facilitate discussion and provide general education; it should not be presented as medical advice. Participants seeking specific guidance should consult their healthcare provider.

General Nutrition

How does overall nutritional health impact my risk of falling?

Overall nutritional health is crucial for maintaining muscle strength, bone density, and overall physical function, all of which are important for balance and fall prevention. Poor nutrition can lead to muscle weakness, decreased bone density, and cognitive decline, increasing the risk of falls.

Are there specific nutrients that play a key role in preventing falls?

Yes, specific nutrients that play a key role in preventing falls include calcium, vitamin D, protein, magnesium, potassium, and vitamin K. These nutrients support bone health, muscle strength, and overall physical function.

What are some simple changes I can make to improve my nutrition?

- Eat a balanced diet with a variety of foods
- Plan meals and snacks to include nutrient-dense options
- Stay hydrated
- Limit ultra processed foods, added sugars, and unhealthy fats
- Practice mindful eating and portion control

Calcium and Vitamin D

How important are calcium and vitamin D for maintaining bone health and preventing falls?

Calcium and vitamin D are essential for bone health. Calcium supports bone structure, while vitamin D enhances calcium absorption and bone growth. Adequate intake of these nutrients helps maintain bone density which reduces the risk of fractures from falls.

What are the best dietary sources of calcium and vitamin D?

Best dietary sources of calcium include dairy products (milk, cheese, yogurt), leafy green vegetables (kale, broccoli), and fortified foods (orange juice, cereals). Vitamin D sources include fatty fish (salmon, mackerel), fortified dairy products, and exposure to sunlight.

Should I consider supplements, and if so, how much should I take?

Supplements may be necessary if you're not getting enough calcium and vitamin D from your diet. The recommended daily intake for calcium is 1,000-1,200 mg for adults, and for vitamin D, it's 600-800 IU. Consult with your healthcare provider to determine if supplementing is necessary and the appropriate dosage for your needs.





Protein Intake

How does protein intake affect muscle strength and fall risk?

Protein intake is vital for muscle repair and growth, which helps maintain muscle strength and function, reducing fall risk. Protein needs increase as we age, and adequate protein intake can help prevent muscle loss and support recovery from falls or injuries.

What are the best sources of protein for someone looking to prevent falls?

Best sources of protein include lean meats, poultry, fish, eggs, dairy products, legumes, nuts, seeds, and soy products like tofu and tempeh.

Hydration

How does staying hydrated impact my risk of falling?

Staying hydrated helps maintain physical and cognitive function, reduces the risk of dizziness, confusion, and muscle cramps, which can lead to falls. Dehydration can impair balance and coordination, increasing fall risk.

How much water should I be drinking daily to maintain proper hydration?

Aim to drink at least 8-10 cups (2-2.5 liters) of water daily. This amount can vary depending on factors like age, gender, activity level, and climate.

Micronutrients

Are there other vitamins and minerals that are important for bone and muscle health?

Yes, other important vitamins and minerals include magnesium, potassium, and vitamin K. Magnesium supports bone structure and muscle function, potassium helps maintain muscle and nerve function, and vitamin K is important for bone metabolism.

How can I ensure I'm getting enough magnesium, potassium, and vitamin K in my diet?

Magnesium, potassium and vitamin K are found in a variety of foods including many fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

- Magnesium: nuts, seeds, whole grains, leafy greens, and legumes
- Potassium: bananas, oranges, potatoes, spinach, and tomatoes
- Vitamin K: leafy green vegetables (kale, spinach), broccoli, and Brussels sprouts

Weight Management

How does being underweight or overweight affect my risk of falling?

Being underweight can lead to muscle loss and decreased bone density, increasing fall risk. Being overweight can strain joints and impair mobility, also increasing fall risk.





What dietary strategies can help me achieve and maintain a healthy weight?

- Eat a balanced diet with appropriate portions.
- Include plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, and lean proteins.
- Limit ultra processed foods, sugary beverages, and foods high in saturated fats.
- Stay physically active.

Diet and Bone Health

What dietary changes can I make to improve my bone health?

Aim for 3 servings of calcium rich foods every day.

Choose foods naturally rich in vitamin D or fortified with vitamin D every day.

Talk to your health care provider about checking your serum Vitamin D levels every year and supplement if necessary.

Consume foods high in magnesium and vitamin K.

Limit alcohol and caffeine intake.

Are there specific foods that are particularly beneficial for bone density?

Yes, foods like dairy products, leafy greens, nuts, seeds, and fortified foods are particularly beneficial for bone density. Incorporating these into your diet can help maintain strong bones.

Diet and Muscle Health

How does diet influence muscle health and strength?

A balanced diet with adequate protein, vitamins, and minerals supports muscle repair, growth, and overall function. Nutrients like protein, magnesium, potassium, and vitamin D are crucial for maintaining muscle health and strength.

How can I balance my meals to include the necessary nutrients for fall prevention?

Include a variety of foods from all food groups in each meal: protein (meat, fish, legumes), dairy or fortified alternatives, whole grains, fruits, and vegetables. Ensure adequate hydration and consider supplements if deemed necessary.

Meal Planning

How can meal planning help with bone and muscle health?

Planning out meals and snacks ahead of time can help ensure you are getting all the nutrients you need to maintain health. A healthy dietary pattern includes 2 servings of fruit, 3 servings of vegetables, lean proteins at every meal, 3 servings of low-fat dairy and ½ of your daily grains as whole grains.

Special Diets

Are there specific dietary considerations if I have conditions like osteoporosis or sarcopenia?

For osteoporosis, focus on calcium and vitamin D-rich foods and weight-bearing exercises. For sarcopenia, prioritize protein intake and resistance training to maintain muscle mass. Consult with a dietitian for personalized advice.

How can I adapt my diet if I have dietary restrictions or allergies?

Identify alternative sources for essential nutrients. For example, if you're lactose intolerant, choose lactose-free dairy or fortified soy milk. For nut allergies, get protein from seeds, legumes, and lean meats. Work with a dietitian to create a balanced diet that meets your needs.

Snacking

How can snaking impact bone and muscle health?

Snacks can be a great way to ensure you are meeting nutrient requirements. When adding snacks to your day try to include fruits, vegetables, low fat dairy, lean proteins and whole grains. Some snack ideas include:

- Greek yogurt or cottage cheese with fruit
- Hummus with vegetable sticks
- Peanut butter and whole grain pretzels
- Whole-grain crackers with low-fat cheese
- Low sodium nuts and seeds

How can I avoid unhealthy snacking that might lead to weight gain?

Plan and prepare healthy snacks in advance and bring those healthy snacks with you when you are out and about. Keep unhealthy snacks out of easy reach and choose the nutrient-dense options first. Drink water to stay hydrated and avoid mistaking thirst for hunger.

Supplements

Are there any supplements you recommend for someone at risk of falling?

If you are following a healthy dietary pattern, you may not need supplements, except for vitamin D for people living in New England. Consult with a healthcare provider and or dietitian to determine your specific needs.

How do I know if I need a supplement and what should I look for in a quality product?

A healthcare provider can assess your diet and health status to determine if supplements are needed. Supplements are not regulated like medications, so it is important to look for products that are third-party tested for quality and safety, and choose reputable brands.

Medication Concerns



Are there any foods or supplements that might interact with my medications and affect my fall risk?

Some foods and supplements can interact with medications, affecting their efficacy or causing side effects. For example, vitamin K can interact with blood thinners, and grapefruit can affect statins efficacy. Always consult with your healthcare provider or pharmacist about potential interactions.

How can I manage my diet to minimize these interactions?

Discuss your medications and dietary supplements with your healthcare provider. Keep a list of your medications and supplements and follow guidelines on timing and food interactions. Avoid known food-drug interactions and stay informed about potential issues.

Monitoring Nutritional Status

How can I monitor my nutritional status to ensure I'm getting the right nutrients?

Regular check-ups with your healthcare provider, including blood tests to check for deficiencies, can help monitor your nutritional status. Keep a food diary to track your intake in order to identify areas for improvement.

Are there specific signs of nutritional deficiencies that I should be aware of?

Signs of nutritional deficiencies can include fatigue, muscle weakness, bone pain, frequent illnesses, hair loss, and changes in skin or nail health. If you notice any of these symptoms, consult with your healthcare provider.

Education and Resources

Do you have educational materials or resources about nutrition and fall prevention?

Yes, many organizations offer educational materials, including:

- National Osteoporosis Foundation
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
- Local health departments and community centers

Are there community programs or services you recommend for nutritional support?

Community programs such as senior centers, local health departments, and non-profit organizations often offer nutritional support services, including meal programs, nutrition counseling, and educational workshops.

Follow-Up



How often should I follow up to reassess my nutritional needs and fall risk?

Regular follow-ups are recommended every 6-12 months or as needed based on your health status. More frequent visits may be necessary if you have specific health concerns or are making significant dietary changes.

What should I track or monitor between our visits to ensure I'm on the right track?

Keep track of your dietary intake, physical activity, weight, and any symptoms or changes in your health. Maintain a food and exercise diary and note any questions or concerns to discuss during your follow-up visits.

Sources:

National Institute on Aging
National Osteoporosis Foundation
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
Harvard Health Publishing
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Mayo Clinic

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Sources:

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