Calcium Counting

Did you know that the body manufactures a variety of minerals? The body however, does not manufacture calcium. That is why dietary calcium is essential to maintaining healthy bones. Calcium is important to bone health because the body sheds dietary calcium through skin, nails, hair, sweat and waste products. When this lost calcium is not replaced, the body breaks down bone to obtain the mineral.

Throughout a person's lifetime, bones undergo a process called remodeling in which small amounts of old bone are absorbed into the body and new bone is formed to replace it. The vast majority of bone growth is during the teen years with slow growth extending to about age 35

According to the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, as an individual ages the balance between bone absorption and bone formation changes, resulting in the loss of bone tissue. In addition, the mineral content of bones decreases so that they become less dense and more fragile. A calcium-rich diet helps build and maintain strong bones throughout life.

The following is a brief outline for calcium intake for all stages of life:

Ages 4 to 8:
Aim for 800 mg of calcium per day with three servings of milk to meet that goal.

Ages 9 to 19:
Children in this age group should put calcium deposits in their "own bank" with a 1300 mg intake of calcium each day.

Ages 20 to 35:
Bone is not formed as readily as before, though they will reach their peak strength during these years. Adults in this age group need at least 1000 mg of calcium each day.

Ages 35 to 50:
Adults may gradually begin to lose bone, so 1000 mg of calcium each day is crucial to help keep bone loss to a minimum.

Over age 50:
Increase intake to 1200 mg to encourage bone health.

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Please consult Dr. Haverbush or a physician for specific treatment recommendations.

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