



# What do you know about bones?

## Bone Facts

*Your body has 206 bones. Bones are alive and grow inside you. Tiny bone-building cells are always at work, shaping your skeleton every day.*

### *Why do we need bones?*

Our bones support our muscles and other soft tissues. Without bones, we would just be a lump on the ground.

### *How can bones be strong enough to carry your weight, yet light enough not to slow you down?*

Bones get their amazing strength from calcium, phosphorus and other minerals. Your skeleton doesn't feel heavy because all of the long bones are hollow.

### *So, what are these bones made of?*

They are mostly collagen (a protein that is like a soft framework for bones) and calcium phosphate (a mineral that makes bones hard). Collagen and calcium work together to make bones strong and flexible. All together, the bones in your body form your skeleton. Your skeleton is very strong, but also very light.

## Cool Fact

Most of your body's calcium is contained in your bones and teeth!!

(The rest is in your blood — weird, huh?)

## How can we build strong bones?

Two things make build strong bones: being physically active and eating foods that have calcium and other minerals.

### *First thing you can do is be physically active.*

You know it is important to have strong, healthy bones now and when you grow up, right? Here are some ideas of weight-bearing physical activities to get you started. Weight-bearing means your muscles (and bones!) are working against gravity — think jumping, running, lifting weights. Do some of these bone-healthy activities every day.

- Soccer is a sport of U.S. champions and great for you, too!
- Try out your moves, baby! Dancing is fun and good for your bones.
- Ask a friend to sign up for karate or tae kwon do classes with you.
- You can be the next tennis superstar. Grab a racket and hit the court!
- A couple sets of push-ups will make for a stronger body and stronger bones.
- Chalk + Sidewalk = Hopscotch, a super workout for your bones.
- Jog around the neighborhood — feel good about your bones and yourself!
- Challenge some friends to a jump rope contest — it helps your heart as well as your bones.



### *The second thing you can do to build strong bones*

is to eat foods that have a lot of calcium in them. Foods that have the most calcium are in the dairy group: milk, cheese, yogurt and ice cream. Don't forget that puddings made with milk, mac & cheese, broccoli & cheese, grilled cheese sandwich and smoothies that have ice cream are also high in calcium. But calcium can be found in a lot of other foods too: tofu, broccoli, orange juice, bok choy and soy milk.



### *What about these foods?*

Pizza, pudding, hot chocolate, nachos with cheese, wraps with cheese, tofu and cream soups have calcium, too.

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