

Dairy consumption ineffective in preventing age-related bone loss or fractures

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Dairy products provide more bone-beneficial nutrients than any other food group. Yet a new study based on data from the Study of Women's Health Across the Nation (SWAN) shows that during the menopause transition, when bone loss is accelerated, they offer little benefit in preventing bone mineral density loss or fractures. Study results are

published online in *Menopause*, the journal of The North American Menopause Society (NAMS).

Growing up, children are often encouraged to drink milk. That's because dairy products contain more than 12 [essential nutrients](#) that promote bone mineralization, including calcium, phosphorus, vitamin D, and high-quality protein. Unfortunately, as women enter the menopause transition, bone loss accelerates and may lead to osteoporosis. According to SWAN data, this bone loss is not slowed down by the consumption of [dairy products](#) nor is [fracture risk](#) mitigated.

The new study specifically looked at the effect of dairy intake on femoral and spine bone mineral density. It is one of the few studies dedicated to examining how dairy consumption affects a woman's risk of [bone loss](#) and fractures across the menopause transition. Because two of the greatest risk factors for osteoporosis—age and sex—are beyond a woman's control, there is an increased focus on possible modifiable risk factors to slow this irreversible, age-related, progressive, degenerative skeletal disease that makes a woman more susceptible to bone fractures. Women are at greater risk for osteoporosis than men, and the risk increases significantly as women age.

Study results appear in the article "Dairy intake is not associated with improvements in bone mineral density or risk of fractures across the [menopause transition](#): data from the Study of Women's Health Across the Nation."

"This study adds to the existing, albeit inconsistent, data suggesting a lack of benefit from dairy intake on bone mineral density and fracture risk. However, there are many other health benefits of a Mediterranean-type diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, as well as lean protein such as fish and low-fat dairy. In addition, regular weight-bearing exercise, such as walking or jogging, can help maintain [bone](#)

strength, and activities that improve strength and balance, such as yoga and tai chi, may help prevent falls," says Dr. Stephanie Faubion, NAMS medical director.

More information: Taylor C. Wallace et al. Dairy intake is not associated with improvements in bone mineral density or risk of fractures across the menopause transition, *Menopause* (2020). [DOI: 10.1097/gme.0000000000001555](https://doi.org/10.1097/gme.0000000000001555)

Provided by The North American Menopause Society

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