EVIDENCE-BASED INSIGHTS FOR PATIENT CONVERSATIONS

HOW PRUNES CAN SUPPORT BONE HEALTH NATURALLY

Prunes contain nutrients that support bone health, including vitamin K, manganese and antioxidants.

Prunes are well known for their beneficial effect on gut health. But prunes are important for bone health too. Recommending prunes to your patients is an easy way for them to be proactive about bone health.

HOW DO PRUNES SUPPORT BONE HEALTH?

Research shows that eating five prunes daily helps support bone health. It's likely due to the combination of bone-building nutrients that are naturally found in prunes. A 40 g serving of prunes is a source of:

- Copper (0.11 mg)
- Manganese (0.125 mg)
- Potassium (300 mg)
- Vitamin B6 (0.08 mg)
- Vitamin K (24 µg)

Prunes also have boron and antioxidant polyphenols, which support bone health.[1] These nutrients all work together – in conjunction with calcium and vitamin D from other foods – to delay bone loss and improve bone mineral density.

Prunes also contain fibre. The antioxidants and fibre in prunes may alter the gut microbiome and decrease the circulation of inflammatory markers, ultimately decreasing bone turnover.[2]

BONES AND OSTEOPOROSIS

As you know, bones are in a constant state of turnover and peak bone density is reached between ages 18 and 25. As we age, it is no longer possible to add to bone density at an equal rate to the shedding of older bone tissue. Bone loss can lead to osteoporosis if left unchecked.[3]

Studies show that eating a serving of about five prunes per day may help delay bone loss, improve bone mineral density and enhance bone formation.

[1] https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6520874/

[2] https://bit.ly/3BkbslR | www.frontiersin.org

[3] https://osteoporosis.ca/facts-and-stats/

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BONE HEALTH AT EVERY AGE

Talking to patients about bone health is important at every age throughout the lifespan.

YOUNG WOMEN:

Young women taking birth control pills are more susceptible to bone loss and suboptimal bone health as they age. A randomized clinical trial found that women aged 18-25 who were taking birth control pills saw a potential protective effect on trabecular density of the tibia and radius bones when they ate five prunes daily over six and 12 months.[4]

WOMEN 50+:

Several studies show that postmenopausal women were able to prevent bone loss by eating about five prunes daily. Prunes protect bone mineral density (BMD) in the leg and hip bones and possibly reduce fracture risk. Plus, prunes enhance bone formation and protect against bone breakdown.[5,6]

MEN 50+:

As testosterone production drops, so does bone density, but less so in men than women. Researchers looked at the effects of prunes on bone density and strength in men aged 50-79. Men who consumed prunes daily had modest beneficial effects for bone mineral density in the tibia (arm) bones and positive effects on bone turnover.[7]

[4]https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2475299124023515

[5]https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2161831323000236?via%3Dihub

[6] https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00198-016-3524-8

[7] https://www.mdpi.com/2072-6643/14/2/276

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUR PATIENTS

Proper nutrition and regular physical activity remain the best advice to patients to help them ensure lifelong bone health. Lifestyle changes to improve bone health are beneficial at every age.

Nutrition: Remind patients to...

- Eat five California Prunes daily for beneficial effects on bone health. Prunes contain bone-supporting nutrients, such as vitamin K, copper and manganese.
- Eat foods that contain other bone-building nutrients, like calcium and vitamin D.
- Get enough protein, which helps build and repair bones.

Physical activity: Remind patients to...

- Exercise to increase muscle strength, improve balance and decrease the risk of broken bones from falls.
- Try weight-bearing activities to support bone health. Good options include walking, aerobics, or any other activities where feet hit the ground.
- Include strength training exercises, such as using free weights or doing lunges and planks.
- Add stretching exercises too.

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