

This literature is produced as an acknowledgement of the life and work of Desmond and Hildergard Atherton. Desmond worked as a GP in Coventry and Hildergard was a founder Trustee of Coventry Churches Housing Association (now Touchstone Housing Association) and The ExtraCare Charitable Trust. Desmond's strength and patience towards those in his care and Hildergard's commitment and support to our charity's work have influenced the development of well-being service that is now benefiting our residents.



Take extra care of your  
diet



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A good, balanced diet in your older years will help you continue on the path for a longer healthy life.

So here's some advice on how to take ExtraCare of your diet.

## Calcium and healthy bones

Calcium is a very important nutrient. Not enough in your diet can contribute to Osteoporosis (Brittle Bone Disease).

- Skimmed milk contains more calcium than full milk.
- Foods made from milk e.g. cheese, yoghurt etc. also contain a high level of calcium.
- Having a pint of skimmed milk a day, adding other dairy products, should provide enough calcium in your diet.

An exciting recent discovery is that certain kinds of oil can help people with arthritis. These oils contain essential fatty acids but it is hard to find enough of these oils in your diet. There are two groups of essential fatty acids,

### Omega 6 and Omega 3.

They are found in Sunflower oil and in oily fish, especially mackerel, sardines, pilchards and salmon. Try and eat this kind of food 3-4 times a week. Apart from helping with arthritis and rheumatism it also protects you from heart disease. Chemists and health shops sell fish oil capsules. These are made either from halibut or cod liver oil. They contain a high concentration of Omega 3, and also contain vitamin D. This helps the body to absorb calcium.

**NOTE:** Fish oil capsules also contain a lot of vitamin A and this is dangerous in high doses especially in pregnant women.

**For further information contact your GP, Nurse or Well-being advisor.**

## Facts about food and arthritis

**Gout is a painful inflammation of the joints.** Research shows that certain foods can increase your risk of suffering from gout. There is evidence that the body can't properly absorb a substance called purine. Too much purine results in a build up of uric acid which can crystallise in the joints, often the toes, and cause pain.

Avoid eating foods that contain high quantities of purine. Some of these are liver, heart, kidney and sweet breads. Others are meat extract (Oxo), anchovies, crab, fish roe, herring, mackerel, sardines and shrimp.

Alcohol also affects uric build up so is best avoided.

## To prevent and improve arthritis

- Eat less sugar and fat, especially refined sugar and saturated fat.
- Eat more fruit and vegetables.
- Try replacing meat with fish, especially the oily kind.
- Take plenty of calcium and iron rich foods e.g. oily fish and red meat.

**NOTE:** Sardines contain as much iron as beef.

**NOTE:** Iron is better absorbed if it is combined with vitamin C, so have a good portion of salad of fresh vegetables.

**NOTE:** Tea reduces the amount of iron that your body can absorb, so avoid drinking tea with your meal.



## Dietary advice for osteoporosis and its prevention

**Osteoporosis affects 1 in 3 women & 1 in 12 men over the age of 50 yrs.**

A good general balanced diet is needed to get the different minerals & vitamins from the different food groups such as: dairy products, fruit and vegetables, protein and starchy foods.

Too much alcohol may damage bone repair. Be careful to stay within safe limits of 2-3 units per day for women and 3-4 units per day for men.

Also too much caffeine (found in coffee & lesser amounts found in tea) can affect absorption of calcium.

Bone is made strong and rigid by calcium, the most important mineral for bone.

Recommended dose for adults is "100 mgs a day" (COMA 1998). If you have osteoporosis you may have been recommended to increase this amount to 1200 mgs a day. If this target cannot be met by diet alone your GP may recommend a supplement.

Here are some examples of food with good calcium levels. (Remember low fat alternatives may be available for most dairy foods):

Food	Mgs of calcium	Food	Mgs of calcium
Glass of whole milk	22	1 egg	32
Glass of skimmed milk	23	1 can (115 gms) sardines in sauce	115
Pot of yoghurt	225	Prawns (60 gms)	90
10z (25 gms) cheddar cheese	220	Small can (150gms) baked beans	59
2 slices of white bread	72	7 dried apricots	52
2 slices of wholemeal bread	39	Cabbage (95 gms/4ozs)	71
1 large orange	70		

Sunlight on skin will produce vitamin D in the body. This vitamin is necessary to help to absorb calcium. Expose your face and arms 20 minutes a day in the Summer months and the body will store vitamin D to last the rest of the year.

**NOTE:** Avoid staying out too long without protection.

Apart from the sun, Vitamin D is found in dairy products, and fish and margarine in smaller quantities.

## Other things you can do to help

**Stop smoking.** This will help both your general health and bone health.

**Physical Activity.** Regular weight bearing exercises will maintain bone density. Talk to your gym instructor.

If you require further information on your medication for osteoporosis please talk to your pharmacist, GP or nurse.

If you require further information on osteoporosis please talk to your well-being advisor or:

**National Osteoporosis Society** 01761 472721  
www.nos.org.uk or **Help the Aged** Healthy Bones  
Booklet 0808 800 65 65 - helpline.



## Tips for the prevention & relief of constipation

**Daily bowel movement is by no means essential for, nor is it a sign of, good health.** Provided the bowels move regularly and without discomfort then it does not matter if your natural bowel frequency is once every 2 or 3 days. Constipation is more common in older people because the power of the bowel muscle diminishes with age, and because older people tend to take more medicines that have constipating effects.

## What dietary changes can help prevent constipation?

- You should have 20 - 35 grams of fibre (roughage) daily.

Below are some examples of foods containing fibre:

Food	Grams	Food	Grams
Wheat Bran Cereal (1oz)	10	Prunes (3)	3.5
Banana	3.8	Apple (small)	2.8

- Eat high fibre foods such as raisins, bran cereals and whole grain bread.
- Eat peas, beans and lentils.
- Eat baked beans and baked potatoes.
- Eat vegetables and fresh fruit (aim to have 5 servings per day - with skin where possible)
- Eat prunes or figs or drink plum juice.
- Eat less white bread, cakes and sugar.
- Drink at least 8-10 glasses of water per day.
- Drink several cups of warm to hot tea, coffee or water in the morning to stimulate bowel action.



**PLEASE NOTE:** Increase fibre intake slowly. Rapid increase in dietary fibre (roughage) can cause wind, bloating and flatulence.

Always consult your doctor if you experience any sudden change in bowel habit or any pain or bleeding from your back passage.

## Other suggestions

- Eat dried fruit or nuts as a snack instead of crisps.
- Eat digestive biscuits as first choice if eating biscuits.
- Have whole-wheat crackers instead of cream crackers.
- If baking, use half wholemeal and half traditional white flour.
- Try brown rice or pasta instead of white varieties.



## What else can I do?

- Regular exercise improves digestion and reduces stress. Do daily exercise, like a brisk half-hour walk.
- Get used to regular bowel habit. The best time is usually the first hour after breakfast. Do not hurry, sit with a hot drink for at least 10-15 minutes regardless of whether you manage to pass a stool or not.
- Sit quietly for 15 minutes after eating a meal in order to aid digestion.

## Laxatives

- The bowel in someone who has over-used laxatives for a long period of time becomes sluggish and eventually dependent on the use of laxatives.
- Sometimes a prescribed medicine may cause constipation, and changing this medicine may be all that is required to get rid of the constipation.
- Someone who has a period of immobility will probably find that their constipation improves once they are up and about.