

Weight Manager

Protein + Dairy to Subtract Weight, Not Bone

It's common knowledge that most people tend to gain weight and lose bone as they age—both unhealthy. But if you try to lose unwanted weight, it only promotes more bone loss, increasing the risk of fractures and the dangerous complications that accompany them. The dilemma then, is how to lose those extra pounds without doing damage to your bones. A study designed to answer that exact question provides some answers.

The High-Protein/Dairy Diet. The research, from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign and Pennsylvania State University, studied 130 men and women aged 30 to 65. The people in the one-year study ate one of two diets: (1) a reduced-calorie diet that provided either the currently recommended intake of 0.36 grams of protein per pound of body weight, which included two servings of low-fat dairy a day, or (2) 0.64 grams of protein per pound of body weight, including three daily servings of low-fat dairy.

For four months, calories were calculated so the participants would lose weight; for eight months, they

ate enough calories to maintain their weight. The researchers measured bone mineral content and bone density (the mineral content in a defined area of the hip, spine or wrist) at the beginning of the study year, twice during the year, and at the end of the study.

Bone Findings. The researchers found that the second of the weight-loss diets—with nearly twice the recommended amount of protein and three servings a day of low-fat dairy—not only improved calcium intake, but was much more effective at preserving bone mass during weight loss, especially when compared to the lower protein (and higher carbohydrate) weight-loss diet.

EN's Advice. These findings add to the growing evidence that, contrary to long-held beliefs, high-protein diets do not leach calcium from bones, as long as calcium intake is adequate. So, when you cut back on calories, be sure to get plenty of high-quality protein, including three servings of low-fat dairy a day, to protect your bones while you're paring pounds.

You Should Know

Chew on This *Bite*

Tired of hearing about foods you shouldn't eat? So was food critic and nutritionist Bonnie Tandy Leblang, M.S., R.D., who decided to tout foods she likes in addition to covering processed foods in her weekly syndicated column *Supermarket Sampler*. So she created *Bite of the Best* to sing the praises of favorites.

Each week, she raves about an outstanding "bite" on the interactive site www.biteofthebest.com. Not only must *she* like it—nutrition *and* taste-wise—but it has to pass muster with two 20-something, culinary-trained sons. Fun reviews from all three appear on the site.

What might you discover? Brown rice that microwaves in just 90 seconds, beets that are precooked and prepeeled, freeze-dried Fuji apples and organic cultivated wild mushrooms. The site also features easily digestible snippets on gadgets, liquors, restaurants and other related info.

The absolute best part is the give and take among readers, who send comments and questions, answered by Leblang and sometimes even company representatives.



EN Comments

New Diabetes-Friendly Seal May (or May Not?) Make Grocery Shopping Easier

If you're one of the 20 million Americans with diabetes, choosing a healthful diet is critical for good health. In an effort to help, nutritionists at the Kellogg Company developed criteria for a new "Diabetes Friendly" seal.

How Foods Make the Grade. Criteria for the seal are based on recommendations from health organizations, including

the American Diabetes Association and the American Dietetic Association. For a Kellogg's cereal to carry the bright purple and green seal it must contain:

- Maximum 30 grams of carbohydrates per serving.
- Low in fat (typical maximum of 3 grams per serving).
- Maximum 1 gram of saturated fat and 0 grams of trans fat per serving.
- Maximum 9 grams of sugar per serving.

Currently, the seal is displayed only on Kellogg's cereals, including *All-Bran*,



Product 19, *Special K* and *Crispix*, but it may be expanded to other Kellogg's foods, such as breakfast bars and snacks. However, it's not an industry-wide effort, so its usefulness is limited to Kellogg's products.

Nice Try, But Not Perfect. In actuality, its usefulness may be limited more than that. While the concept of flagging foods that are healthful for people with diabetes sounds good, there are drawbacks. A product that's high in sodium might not necessarily be a problem for everyone with diabetes, but that doesn't mean it's healthful. And what if you have diabetes *and* high blood pressure? The seal would be useless because it doesn't account for sodium.

Moreover, some cereals that carry the new seal have us scratching our heads: *Corn Flakes*, *Rice Krispies* and *Reduced-Sugar Frosted Flakes* have also been "awarded" the diabetes-friendly seal by Kellogg. While lower in sugar than other cereals, they certainly are not the best choices for people with diabetes; all are virtually devoid of fiber, an important component for managing blood sugar.

In response to an *EN* query as to why the seal has no fiber criterion, Kellogg agrees that fiber is important for everyone and notes that many of its cereals are high in fiber. It does not explain, however, why the seal has no fiber criterion, only saying that cereal is just one component of breakfast. Apparently, despite the seal, you're supposed to know to get your fiber elsewhere if you eat *Frosted Flakes*.

EN's Take. Even with the diabetes seal or any other logo, it's still a shopper's responsibility to make the best choices for good health. In reality, people with specific diseases should look to foods that are healthful for *all* people. It's all about prevention, not necessarily just treating the diseases you have today. So learn to read Nutrition Facts panels and ingredient labels and make your own decisions, at least until a uniform logo is adopted that encompasses all the features of good foods. And if you have diabetes, learn to count carbohydrates and spread them out throughout the day, eating them with foods that contain protein and fiber as well.