

## **Teenage boys, fruit and vegetables and their bones**

MRC Human Nutrition Research has taken a closer look at the link between consumption of fruit and vegetables and bone health. Published in this month's *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, the study found that those people who eat more fruit and veg may have a higher bone mineral content, which is associated with healthier bones.

The link was particularly striking in adolescent boys, suggesting that eating fruit and veg may be especially important at this stage of development. For example, the boys in this study, eating around 4 portions of fruit and veg a day had 6% more bone mineral in their hip, than the boys who ate around two portions.

According to the National Diet and Nutrition Survey of young people (2000) average fruit and veg intake in 14-18 year old boys was 199g, this works out at around 2 and a half portions a day, only half of the recommended intake of at least 5 portions a day. Osteoporosis affects approximately 3 million people in the UK population. The hip is a common site for osteoporotic fracture and maximising bone mineral content during adolescence is key to reducing the risk of this disease in later life.

Commenting on the study, lead author Celia Prynne said, "Current evidence suggests that women and girls are picking up the health messages about increasing their fruit and vegetables and boys are lagging behind. Osteoporosis is not just confined to women and this study shows that the lack of fruits and vegetables maybe a contributory factor to the development of this disease."

Building healthier bones is yet another reason to encourage teenage boys to increase their fruit and veg intake as part of a balanced diet and an active lifestyle.

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