

Prunes Boost Bone Density

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. antioxidant /,æ.n.ti'ɒk.sɪ.dənt/ a substance that slows down the rate at which something decays because of oxidization
Example: Vitamin C is a good antioxidant.
2. prone /prəʊn/ likely to show a particular characteristic, usually a negative one, or to be affected by something bad, such as damage or an illness
Example: I've always been prone to headaches.
3. brittle /'brɪt.əl/ delicate and easily broken
Example: As you get older your bones become increasingly brittle.
4. independence /,ɪn.dɪ'pen.dəns/ the ability to live your life without being helped or influenced by other people:
Example: It's important that parents should allow their children some independence.
5. extract /'ek.strækt/ a substance taken from a plant, flower, etc. and used especially in food or medicine
Example: The lotion contained extracts from several plants.



A few prunes a day protects older women against osteoporosis, according to new research. Levels of bone boosting hormone oestrogen drop after the menopause which causes an increase in swelling in the body, which can also contribute to bone loss.

The dried plums contain important chemicals that copy it. They are rich in **antioxidants** which lessen swelling and destroy harmful free elements. Over 50s who frequently snacked on them were less **prone** to the disease that leaves people with **brittle** bones that raise the risk of breakage.

The condition affects three million British adults—mostly women. Every year 300,000 people suffer a ‘fragility fracture’ from a fall at standing height or less. They cause significant pain, disability and loss of **independence**. More than 1,000 people die from them—every month.

Previous research has shown that prunes contain polyphenol **extracts**, plant compounds that act as antioxidants and reduce inflammation. They promote lower levels of oxidative stress and inflammation in a type of bone cell called osteoclasts.

Researchers from the Integrative and Biomedical Physiology Program and the Departments of Nutritional Sciences and Kinesiology at The Pennsylvania State University explored the effects of prunes on bone health after menopause.

DISCUSSION

1. What are other ways to help prevent osteoporosis?
2. At what age should we start thinking about our bone health?
3. What changes can we make to our lifestyle to reduce our risk?
4. What do you do to take care of your bones?
5. Do you like prunes? Why or why not?
6. What are the other known health benefits of prunes?