

**Dear Dr. McCrummen, I have osteoporosis and take calcium supplements every day to help keep my bones strong. Will that help protect my teeth from decay? Does fluoride really help old teeth? J.G.**

Calcium intake can help your bones throughout your life. Usually, the tooth enamel has completely formed by age 16. After that time 'extra' calcium is not necessary for teeth. Birth to age 16 is a critical time for calcium and fluoride to be absorbed into the teeth. Fluoride is nature's way to make teeth and bones stronger. People from areas that have fluoride in the water have much less decay than non-fluoridated areas, and less bone fractures are reported from the emergency rooms.

The normal adult dosage of calcium is 1,200-1500Mg a day with 1000 units of vitamin D; about 500Mg's of calcium taken three times a day with meals is best, according to recent research.

Many people opposed to fluoride take vitamin and mineral pills daily, and even herbal supplements that are not regulated by the FDA. Fluoride is a natural substance that provides health benefits as well, whether naturally in water, added to a water system, or taken as a supplement. Many physicians prescribe fluoride to patients with osteoporosis to help harden the bones weakened by the condition. Using fluoride on your teeth from toothpaste, special rinses, and prescription gels, help protect teeth of all ages.