Strong muscles and bones support you every day, and you can support them by eating nutrient-rich foods and getting regular exercise. No matter what age you are, it is important to establish good nutrition, lifestyle and physical activity habits that pave a path for strong muscles and bones.

**Fast Facts**

**Q:** What is protein and is dairy a good source of protein?

**A:** Protein is an essential nutrient (like carbohydrate and fat) your body needs every day. Not all proteins are equal. Quality can make a difference. High-quality proteins, found in dairy, provide all the essential amino acids your body needs and cannot make on its own. Every eight ounce serving of nutrient-rich milk contains eight grams of high-quality protein.

**Q:** What is whey protein?

**A:** Whey protein is a high-quality, complete protein that is naturally found in milk. Whey is digested and absorbed into the bloodstream faster than other forms of protein. The proteins found in dairy are considered “fast-acting” and have been shown to build and maintain muscle. During the cheese making process milk is transformed into curds and whey, therefore whey is a byproduct of making cheese.

**Q:** What are some fast and easy ways to get whey protein into my diet?

**A:** Whey protein is found in milk. Milk contains both whey and casein proteins so whether you enjoy white or flavored milk you are getting the benefits of whey protein.

**Q:** How can protein benefit me at any age?

**A:** Protein can build more lean muscle. A higher protein diet in combination with resistance exercise can help build healthy muscles and support weight management. Protein can help preserve muscle as you age. It can also aid in muscle recovery after a workout.

**Q:** How much and when should I consume protein during the day?

**A:** The Institute of Medicine recommends that 10-35 percent of total daily calories should come from protein. That is about 50-175 grams a day for a 2,000 calories a day diet. Protein timing is also important. It is recommended to consume equal amounts of high-quality protein at each meal and to include high-quality protein with snacks.

**Review the Research**

Research from the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition indicates that whey protein consumption is more effective than soy protein in enhancing lean body mass as part of a resistance exercise program. From helping you curb your hunger, to helping with weight management and preserving lean body muscles, diets higher in protein can help you meet your health and wellness goals.

**Check it!** Experts recommend at least 30 minutes a day of moderate-intensity exercise for adults and older adults.

**Drink it!** Whey protein in milk can help curb hunger, maintain a healthy weight and support an active lifestyle.

**Choosing Three Servings Every Day**

A healthy diet must include adequate protein. Low-fat and fat-free dairy foods provide high-quality protein. Milk, flavored milk, cheese, and yogurt can help you get the protein you need. Regardless of the type or variety of milk, cheese or yogurt protein will be present. Protein is essential every day all day long to actively build, repair and maintain muscle tissues. In addition to high-quality protein, dairy foods are important sources of calcium, vitamin D and six other essential nutrients. For more information visit: wheyprotein.nationaldairycouncil.org

©2013 Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board, Inc.