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### **Discover New Tastes to Promote Bone Health**

*By Janet Hackert, Regional Nutrition and Health Education Specialist  
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It is that time of year when slippery ice makes falls and broken bones more of a concern and when people shift their focus to healthier eating. For a bone-healthy diet that adds some variety, consider the old stand-bys of calcium and Vitamin D, but also some lesser-known nutrients – magnesium, potassium and Vitamin K– and discover some new tastes in 2014.

Calcium and Vitamin D have long been known to be essential for strong bones. Calcium is the major mineral making up bone structure and Vitamin D supports the body's ability to utilize calcium. Milk and milk foods are great sources for these critical nutrients.

Magnesium is also important because of its supporting role, affecting the body's absorption of calcium and the hormones that regulate calcium. Magnesium-rich foods can add some interesting taste treats to the typical American diet. Consider adding these good sources of magnesium: pumpkin seeds, brazil nuts, bran cereal, halibut, quinoa, cashews, black or white beans, artichokes, beet greens or brown rice.

Potassium's job is to maintain a low enough acidity level in the body to keep calcium excretion to a healthy rate. The body's acidity level is determined by acidic residues from foods, such as proteins and cereal grains. It is not based on the acidity of the foods consumed. Everyone know bananas have potassium, but other good sources include sweet potatoes, yogurt, blackstrap molasses, winter squash, apricots, cantaloupe, honeydew melons, citrus fruits, tomatoes and tomato-based foods.

Vitamin K works with Vitamin D to increase bone density. Discover the array of leafy greens and other vegetables that contribute Vitamin K with a wide range of flavors: kale, spinach, turnip greens, collards, Swiss chard, mustard greens, romaine lettuce, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage and cauliflower. Try these fresh, cooked as a vegetable, and in other foods like stir fry, lasagna and other casseroles. People taking an anticoagulant should follow their doctor's instructions about Vitamin K consumption.

So pick a few new foods that promote bone health and find delicious ways to perk up meals and snacks for a double dose of good eating.

For more information on discovering new tastes to promote bone health, or any other topic, contact me, Janet Hackert, Regional Nutrition Specialist, at 660-425-6434 or [HackertJ@missouri.edu](mailto:HackertJ@missouri.edu) or your local University of Missouri Extension office.