GRILLED TOFU AND MUSHROOM SKEWERS

The following recipe and photography was provided by Christina Musgrave of Tasting with Tina.

Prep time: 60 minutes; Cook time: 10 minutes; Servings: 8

Tofu, mushrooms, onions and green peppers are marinated in a balsamic and coconut aminos-based glaze and grilled to perfection. These skewers are perfect for a healthy barbeque, or an easy weeknight grilled dinner.

Ingredients

FOR THE SKEWERS

- 2 blocks extra firm Cleveland Tofu
- 2 Tbsp. Bob's Red Mill corn starch
- 1 lb. sliced white mushrooms
- 1 white onion, cut into squares
- 2 green peppers, cut into thick squares
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 Tbsp. Bragg coconut aminos
- 2 Tbsp. Heinen's balsamic vinegar
- 2 Tbsp. Heinen's extra virgin olive oil
- 1/2 tsp. sea salt
- 1/2 tsp. black pepper

FOR THE SALAD

- 1 cup fresh microgreens
- 1 cup mixed greens
- Diced cucumbers, for serving
- Diced tomatoes, for serving

Instructions

1. Drain the tofu and dry with a towel. Cut into 1-inch squares and gently toss with corn starch in a bowl.
2. Combine the tofu, mushrooms, onion, green pepper, garlic, coconut aminos, balsamic vinegar, olive oil, sea salt and pepper in a large bowl. Mix the ingredients well and marinate for at least 1 hour.
3. After marinating, alternate tofu, mushrooms, peppers and onions on grill-safe skewers.
4. Preheat the grill to medium heat. Cook for 3 minutes on each side, or until cooked, but not overly charred.
5. Serve the skewers over a large salad with microgreens, mixed greens, cucumbers and tomatoes.

BONE HEALTH SUPPLEMENTS AT HEINEN'S *continued from inside*

B12 Supplements

- Heinen's Coenzymated Methyl B12
- Mary Ruth's Methyl B12 Liquid Spray

Potassium

You don't need to pop a pill to get enough potassium! It's easy to meet your daily needs when you pile your plate with these potassium-powered foods:

- Legumes and beans (cooked): Lentils (731 mg/cup), lima beans (955 mg/cup), kidney beans (717 mg/cup), and soybeans (886 mg/cup)
- Baked potatoes with skin: White potatoes (926 mg) and sweet potatoes (438 mg)
- Fruit: Avocado (975 mg/fruit), dried apricots (755 mg/half cup), prunes (637 mg/half cup), bananas (400-500 mg each), and cantaloupe (427 mg/cup cubed)
- Vegetables (cooked): Beet greens (1309 mg/cup), spinach (839 mg/cup), and acorn squash (896 mg/cup, cubed)

Collagen Peptides

Collagen is the most abundant protein in the body. It's the building block of skin, muscles, bones, tendons and ligaments, and other connective tissues. Collagen peptides are small pieces of collagen protein that have been broken down so your body can digest and absorb them more easily.

Recent research shows that daily collagen peptide supplementation can support bone health by moderately improving bone mineral density and favorable bone turnover markers, especially when combined with calcium and vitamin D.

Two high-quality collagen peptide powders you will find in Heinen's Wellness Department are:

- Heinen's Grass-fed Pasture-Raised Collagen Peptides
- Vital Proteins Grass-fed Pasture-Raised Collagen Peptides

Key Takeaway

The best way to achieve optimal bone health is through an Fx-style diet rich in leafy greens, beans, nuts and seeds, and soy foods. If this isn't possible for you, consider adding one of the above whole food-based supplements to bridge any gaps.

**Check with your healthcare provider before starting any new supplements.*

CLUB Fx By Heinen's

Club Fx is a FREE program for Heinen's Tasteful Rewards members that offers education, nutrition tips, product recommendations and recipe inspiration for customers to live their healthiest lives. Interested in becoming a Club Fx member? Update your Tasteful Rewards account to ensure you get our weekly emails and access to personalized nutrition services!

— Food for Health —

Wellness Newsletter

By Melanie Jatsek RD, LD
Heinen's Registered Dietitian

Eat Your Way to Stronger Bones

MORE INSIDE:

Eat Your Way to Stronger Bones

Do you remember those "Got Milk?" ads with celebrities and athletes encouraging us to drink milk for strong bones? Or maybe you learned about milk in grade school as the drink of choice if you wanted to grow up strong like your favorite superhero. Ask anyone old enough to talk what builds strong bones and the majority will confidently declare "milk!"

But what if this isn't exactly true?

Don't get me wrong, I'm not trying to build a case against milk. My goal here is to challenge commonly held beliefs with science-backed facts and simple food-based solutions for healthy bones.

Before we get to that, it's important to understand the conditions and lifestyle habits that threaten bone health in the first place.

Osteopenia and Osteoporosis

Although they both describe conditions of the bone (osteo = bone), osteopenia is like the red light on your car dash warning you that your bones have insufficient mineral content. Osteopenia means a loss of bone density (penia = deficiency), which increases your risk of fractures. Just like ignoring your car's "check engine" light is never a good idea, ignoring this diagnosis has consequences. If left untreated, osteopenia can progress to a disease of brittle bones called osteoporosis (porous bones).

Osteoporosis is characterized by reduced bone formation, excessive bone loss, or a combination of both. It leads to fragile bones and contributes to millions of fractures every year—one-third of which are experienced by men.

Osteopenia and osteoporosis are called "silent" conditions because you don't feel your bones weakening. Physical changes like persistent back pain, height loss, stooped posture, and bone fractures from normal daily activities can serve as osteoporosis warning signs. But these aren't inevitable consequences of aging.

Fortunately, there are steps you can take to minimize risk. And if you have a diagnosis of osteopenia or osteoporosis, these steps can help you slow, stop, or in some cases reverse further bone loss.

Bone Health Hazards

Want a stronger skeleton? See if any of these bone-weakening habits and lifestyle factors ring true for you.

continued inside

- Excess alcohol consumption
- Not eating enough fruit and vegetables
- Eating too much sodium
- A sedentary lifestyle
- Being underweight or overweight
- Smoking
- Insufficient nutrients like calcium, vitamin D, magnesium, and vitamin B12
- Certain medications like steroids, acid-blockers, anticoagulants, and antidepressants

Did you notice how over half of these hazards relate to nutrition? Isn't it empowering to know that there's a lot you can do to prevent and reverse bone disease by simply being more mindful of what goes into (and stays out of!) your mouth?

Bone-Building Vitamins and Minerals

Proper nutrition is paramount for healthy bones, and following an Fx-centered diet can get you there. Meals built around whole plant foods are full of bone-friendly nutrients like calcium, magnesium, potassium, and protein with an added boost of fiber and antioxidants—two bioactive compounds unique to plants.

Since calcium is the most abundant mineral in the body and 99% of it is in our bones and teeth, it makes sense to take a closer look at it to understand how much we should be getting each day and the best food sources for our bones.

Here are the recommended dietary allowances (RDAs) for calcium based on age:

- 0–6 months = 200 mg
- 7–12 months = 260 mg
- 1–3 years = 700 mg
- 4–8 years = 1,000 mg
- 9–13 years = 1,300 mg
- 14–18 years = 1,300 mg
- 19–50 years = 1,000 mg
- 51–70 years = 1,000 mg for men; 1,200 mg for women
- 71+ years = 1,200 mg

To spot any calcium gaps in your diet, I recommend logging your meals for a few days in a free nutrition app like Cronometer. Then fill in any deficiencies with these Fx-approved plant sources of calcium:

- **Greens (Fx Pillar 1):** low-oxalate greens like kale, bok choy, collard greens, turnip greens, and mustard greens are concentrated sources of calcium that are easily absorbed by your body
- **Rainbow fruits and vegetables (Fx Pillar 2):** dried figs, broccoli
- **Omega-3-rich nuts and seeds (Fx Pillar 3):** sesame seeds, chia seeds, almonds, hazelnuts (filberts), tahini (sesame seed butter).
- **Legumes (Fx Pillar 4):** edamame, kidney beans, chickpeas, black beans, pinto beans, white beans, green peas
  - Note: To increase bioavailability of calcium, soak dried beans for several hours or overnight, then drain, rinse, and boil in fresh water.
- **Soy foods (Fx Pillar 4):** edamame (including edamame pasta from Explore Cuisine), tofu, tempeh
  - Check out the recipe on the last page for Grilled Tofu and Mushroom Skewers—a smart, calcium-rich solution for your meatless Monday menu!
- **Whole grains (Fx Pillar 5):** amaranth, quinoa

Right now, you're probably scratching your head thinking, "But Mel, what about dairy products? Don't they have the most calcium of any food?"

While it's true that dairy products provide a lot of calcium, when scientists looked at populations around the world, they discovered that countries that eat the most dairy—like the US, Great Britain, and Scandinavia—tended to have the highest rates of hip fractures. What's more, populations with the lowest dairy intake (i.e., Asia and Africa) were found to have much lower fracture rates.

One explanation for this could be that diets high in dairy also tend to be higher in sodium (from processed food), which increases the amount of calcium your body flushes out in your urine.

Another reason is that unlike dairy products, plant foods offer calcium along with other bone-supporting nutrients that work synergistically. In fact, vegetables like low-oxalate greens offer better calcium absorption than dairy!

Vitamins D3 and K2

These two vitamins work together to support bone health. Vitamin D3 promotes calcium absorption while Vitamin K2 directs calcium to your bones instead of allowing it to build up in your arteries.

Although you can get vitamin D from sun exposure and food sources like mushrooms, supplementation is often necessary to achieve optimal levels.

Vitamin K2 is created by bacteria and therefore found in fermented foods like raw sauerkraut and natto (fermented soy). Our own gut bacteria also make K2—another reason to build your meals around whole fiber-rich plant foods to feed your friendly flora and keep them thriving!

Vitamin B12

Adequate vitamin B12 intake is important for maintaining bone mineral density. It's made by certain microorganisms in the soil and water, which are then absorbed by grazing animals. Non-meat eaters should consider a vitamin B12 supplement to avoid deficiencies and compromised bone health.

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Magnesium

Magnesium is essential for bone development and mineralization. Nuts, seeds, leafy greens, legumes, and whole grains are some of the best sources of magnesium. Notice these foods also made the calcium list above. Mother Nature sure knows what she's doing, doesn't she?

Potassium

Without enough potassium, the body leaches alkaline minerals—including calcium—from bones to balance acidity. Potassium also reduces urinary calcium loss and improves calcium retention, helping to maintain overall bone mineral density.

Just like magnesium, whole plant foods like greens and legumes are the go-to choice for meeting both your calcium and potassium needs!

Key Takeaway

Eating a variety of whole plant foods provides calcium alongside other essential bone-building nutrients while also helping you avoid habits that accelerate bone loss. The best strategy for lifelong bone health is to nourish your body with colorful, minimally processed foods, stay active, and make daily choices that support your skeleton from the inside out

BONE HEALTH SUPPLEMENTS AT HEINEN'S

Taking a supplement when you can get the same nutrition from food robs you of one of life's greatest joys—enjoying the diverse flavors, textures, and aromas of a wholesome, delicious meal. Not only that, but whole plant foods also supply your body with so much more than vitamins and minerals, including bioactive compounds to support your health in ways that supplements can't.

But sometimes you can come up short on certain nutrients no matter how well you plan, and logging your meals in a free nutrition tracking app like Cronometer can help you spot these nutritional gaps.

If you discover that food alone isn't enough to meet your needs for important bone-building nutrients like calcium, vitamin B-12 and magnesium, you may want to consider adding a whole food-based supplement* to your routine.

Bone Health Nutrients: How Much Do You Need?

Meeting the recommended daily intake for these bone-strengthening nutrients is critical for avoiding conditions like osteopenia and osteoporosis.

Calcium: The most abundant mineral in the body; 99% is in your bones and teeth

- 14–18 years = 1,300 mg
- 19–50 years = 1,000 mg
- 51–70 years = 1,000 mg for men; 1,200 mg for women
- 71+ years = 1,200 mg

Magnesium: A mineral essential for bone development and mineralization

- 310-320 mg/day for women
- 400-420 mg/day for men
- 350-360 mg/day during pregnancy
- 310-320 mg/day for breastfeeding

Potassium: A mineral that plays a critical role in bone mineral density by maintaining acid-base balance in the body. It also reduces urinary calcium loss and improves calcium retention.

- 2600 mg/day for adult women
- 3400 mg/day for adult men
- 2500-2900 mg/day for pregnancy
- 2800 mg/day for breastfeeding

Vitamin D3: Promotes calcium absorption

- 600 IU/day for ages 19-70
- 800 IU/day for ages 71 years and older
  - Note: This may not be enough to reach optimal blood levels. Ask your doctor for a 25-hydroxy vitamin D test to be sure.

Vitamin K: Directs calcium to your bones instead of allowing it to build up in your arteries; Recommendations include both vitamin K1 and vitamin K2

- 90 mcg/day for adult women
- 120 mcg/day for adult men

Vitamin B12: Important for maintaining bone mineral density

- 2.4 mcg/day
- 2.6 mcg/day for pregnancy
- 2.8 mcg/day for breastfeeding

Protein: Essential for the growth and repair of muscles, bones, and other tissues

- Adults age 19-49: 0.36 grams of protein per pound of healthy body weight
- Adults age 50 and over: 0.45-0.54 grams of protein per pound of healthy body weight

Whole Food-Based Calcium Supplements at Heinen's (each includes magnesium, vitamin D3 and vitamin K2)

Calcium supplements are best absorbed when taken with food in 500 milligram doses or less at a time. Depending on the calcium gap you are trying to fill, you may need to take one with breakfast and one with dinner.

- Heinen's Algae-Based Calcium
- Garden of Life Vitamin Code Raw Calcium
- New Chapter Bone Strength Take Care

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