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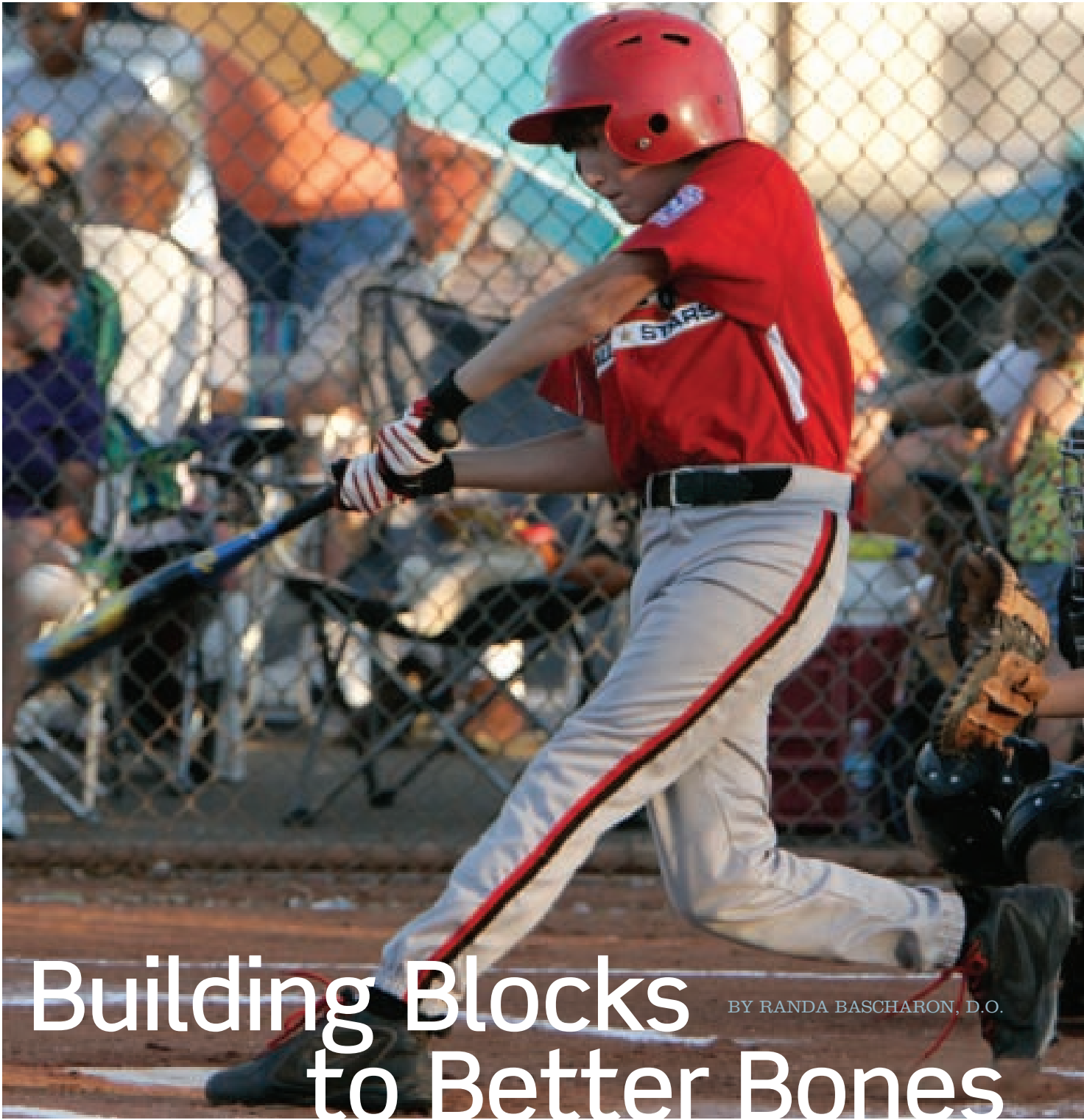


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# Building Blocks to Better Bones

BY RANDA BASCHARON, D.O.

**OSTEOPOROSIS AND TEENS** aren't two words you usually associate together. Osteoporosis is a disease that causes bone thinning and can eventually lead to brittle bones

increasing the risk for fractures. Although osteoporosis most commonly occurs amongst elderly people, the lifestyle choices you make in your youth can significantly impact your

risk of becoming a victim of osteoporosis later on in life.

According to the Food and Nutrition Board of the National Academy of Sciences essential bone building

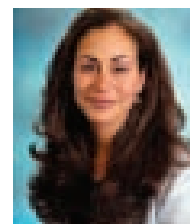


Get them to eat a calcium-rich diet: Milk, yogurt and cheese are great and easy options to incorporate calcium into your diet. Also, there's a wide-variety of calcium-fortified cereals, juices and instant oatmeal if your child doesn't like to drink milk.

If your teen is lactose intolerant you can use calcium or a lactase enzyme supplements for their daily doses of calcium and Vitamin D. Also, there are several non-dairy calcium-fortified options such as fortified rice milk, soymilk or juice in addition to other non-dairy foods containing high levels of calcium such as: almonds, tofu, broccoli, bok choy, spinach, peas, baked and white beans, and salmon.

Get them moving: Exercise is beneficial because it helps places stress on bones which strengthening them. Exercise also allows blood to flow to the bones bringing essential nutrients helping bones grow. Lack of exercise can lead to weakened bones which can lead to osteoporosis. It is recommended your teen gets at least 30 minutes of physical activity three times a week. Participating on a sports team, biking, dancing, hiking or going to the gym are so good ways for your teen to incorporate physical activity into their week.

This is a crucial time for your teen to establish strong and healthy bones. By talking with your child and helping them establish responsible eating and exercise habits, you can help ensure better bone health in the long run. **LVS**



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occurs from ages 9 through 16 so they recommend that children between ages 9 and 16 consume 1300 milligrams of calcium per day. A person reaches their peak bone mass by their mid-20s, so it is vital that your teen gets enough calcium, vitamin D and exercise to ensure healthy bones for life. It is important to achieve their peak bone mass so the body can sustain itself with the calcium built up during youth.

Behaviors such as excessive smoking and drinking; eating large amounts of junk food; consuming caffeine and lack of exercise can significantly increase a person's risk for osteoporosis. With careful planning, you can help your teen lead a healthier lifestyle and lower their chances of having to deal with this painful disease when they are older. Here is a good way to help your teen build strong bones: