

# A carrot a day could keep bone loss at bay: study

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We've all heard that carrots are good for our eyesight, but a new, eye-opening study has found that when properly modified, the vegetable can benefit our bones, too.

Researchers at Texas A&M AgriLife's Vegetable and Fruit Improvement Center, in collaboration with Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, have developed a carrot that helps people absorb 41 per cent more calcium than from a regular carrot.

The carrot is higher in bioavailable calcium, meaning it can be more readily absorbed by the body.

When the calcium-laden carrot was eaten by study participants — 15 men and 15 women — urine tests administered 24 hours later revealed that their calcium absorption had increased.

Researchers caution that the genetically modified carrots offer only a fraction of the body's daily calcium intake. "The daily requirement for calcium is 1,000 milligrams, and a 100 gram serving of these carrots provides only 60 milligrams, about 42 per cent of which is absorbable," he noted. "A person could not eat enough of them to get the daily requirement."

The researchers believe that more fruit and vegetables will be engineered that can optimize a person's calcium intake and stave off bone thinning diseases such as osteoporosis.

"Poor diets and exercise habits prevent many people from achieving optimal bone health," reads the study. "To help compensate for this deficiency, one strategy is to increase the calcium content of the foods they eat."

The study was published Monday in the online edition of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.