

Shirin Hooshmand, Ph.D., researcher and associate professor at San Diego State University, specializes in nutrition research related to bone and cartilage health. A research consultant to the California Prune industry, many of her studies examine the effect of prunes on bone health.

Q: How did you become interested in bone health?

A: Nutrition plays an essential role in bone health. Bone loss may be prevented, repaired and reversed using nutrition. My research focuses mainly on prevention and reversal of bone loss.

Q: What are common bone health conditions?

A: Osteoporosis is a bone disease that occurs when the body loses too much bone, makes too little bone, or both. Osteoporosis is typical among the elderly and more common in women due to lower estrogen levels after menopause. Osteopenia refers to bone density that is lower than normal peak density, but not low enough to be considered osteoporosis. Approximately 44 million people in the United States suffer from either osteoporosis or osteopenia due to hormonal problems, medications, genes and other issues.

Q: Can you attest to the nutritional attributes of California Prunes?

A: California Prunes have a variety of nutrients that make them unique. Among other traditional dried fruits, only prunes are high in vitamin K. They are also a source of manganese, copper and potassium. The nutrients and vitamins in California Prunes combine to benefit bone health.

Q: Have California Prunes shown favourable results specific to osteoporosis?

A: As we age, we begin to lose bone density, but we may be able to delay and repair bone density loss through nutrition. Several clinical studies have shown that 50-100 grams of prunes per day can help to reduce bone loss in women with low bone density (osteopenia).^{1,2,3}

Q: What is the most exciting finding that your research has revealed about California Prunes?

A: To date, the most exciting findings are from human studies conducted among post-menopausal women. Post-menopausal women lose 1-1.5 per cent of their bone density per year, but studies show that women who eat prunes daily are actually able to *maintain* their bone density and *may lessen* additional loss.^{1,2,3}

Q: What is the one thing you wish more people knew about California Prunes – but don't?

A: I don't think many people are aware of all of the health benefits of California Prunes. I wish people understood that California Prunes are an amazing fruit and may positively impact bone health beginning at an early age. If people would try California Prunes, I know they – and their bones – would love them!

1 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26902092>

2 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21736808>

3 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28505102>