

Dear Jax,

What are bones made from?

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Questions, name & address

Dear Anthony,

Most of the bones we see are hard, dead sticks of stuff, like in a museum or on your dinner plate after eating some chicken.

But the bones in you are alive, changing every day.

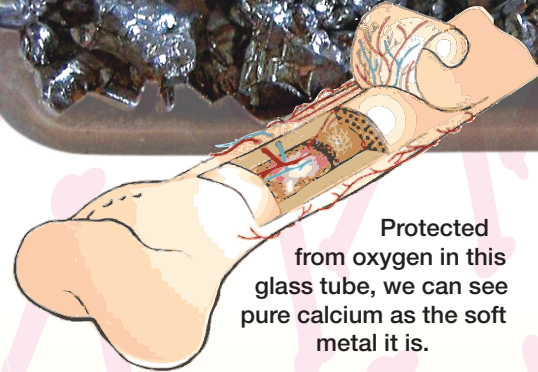
Bones are made mostly from calcium (KAL-see-em) – an element that's a bit of a surprise. Beakman and I are amazed that calcium is really a metal.

Calcium mixes with oxygen, which is why we don't see it pure very often. It also mixes with lots of other stuff, which is why it's a big part of things like cement. And when it mixes with phosphate (FOZ-fate), we get the stuff of bones.



Calcium in the foods you eat cannot be used to build, take care of, or repair your bones unless you also get vitamin D. That's one reason it's added to most milk.

Jax Place
Jax Place



Protected from oxygen in this glass tube, we can see pure calcium as the soft metal it is.



Beakman's World on
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When a baby is born, she or he has about 300 bones. Some of those bones hook onto each other and become one bone.

By the time you're in your 20s, your bones will stop getting bigger, and there should be around 206 of them.

The harder parts of your bones are minerals, like calcium, but there is a kind of soft skin covering bones. Inside larger bones there is also a kind of blood-cell foam called the marrow, which makes blood cells for your body.