

Bone Up on Osteoporosis

Have you experienced broken or fractured bones or noticed that your posture is changing, your height is shrinking and your back is becoming humped, curved or deformed? This may be a signal that you may be suffering from osteoporosis.

Bone Basics:

The critical years for building bone mass are from pre-teen to 30 years of age. Bones are tissues that change constantly as new bone replaces old bone. One in every two women and one in every eight men over the age of 50 are likely to suffer an osteoporosis-related fracture.

How will you know if you are at risk for developing osteoporosis?

There are several risk factors that you cannot change.

Advanced Age: bones become less dense and weaker as you age.

Being Female: You are four times more likely to develop osteoporosis than men.

Race: Caucasian and Asian are more likely to develop osteoporosis.

Small-boned and thin women: You are at a higher risk because of less bone mass.

Low Estrogen Level: Menopause, hysterectomy and excessive dieting

Increase the risk of developing osteoporosis.

Family History: Susceptibility to fracture may be, in part, hereditary.

Risk factors which you are able to change include:

Change diet: From one that is low in calcium and Vitamin D to one that includes more calcium and Vitamin D.

Inadequate exercise: This prevents the building of bone mass. Begin a daily routine of weight-bearing exercises to build bone mass.

Smoking and consumption of alcohol: these should be limited to help prevent osteoporosis.

Talk with your doctor

Always inform **ALL** of your physicians about **all** prescription and non-prescription medicines you are taking. It may be necessary for the physicians to adjust your medicines and add



various supplements. Your physician may recommend a bone density test and may prescribe medications to help prevent bone loss and slow down



the progression of osteoporosis.

What can I do to help prevent the development of osteoporosis?

A diet rich in Vitamin D and calcium is a must! Foods such as milk, cheese, yogurt, sardines, collard greens, broccoli, sardines, tofu, or calcium-fortified foods such as orange juice should be included in your daily diet. If you are concerned about weight gain select low fat and nonfat milk and milk products. The calcium content remains the same within these, but the fat content is significantly less. If you are 55 years of age or older, you should consume 1,500 milligrams of calcium daily.

Foods which are high in phosphorous, such as soft drinks, upset the calcium/phosphorous ratio and should be limited. The best way to receive the adequate amount of calcium is by consuming foods high in this!

Daily exercise

is a must for general good health. Weight-bearing exercises, such as walking, cause muscles to work against gravity to help maintain bone strength. Other weight-bearing exercises include gardening, dancing, swimming, and bicycling. These exercises all help in strengthening muscles and improve flexibility and balance.



Smoking has been associated with heart disease and lung cancer for years. Smokers are also at a higher risk for developing osteoporosis as smoking is toxic to bone cells and reduces the body's absorption of calcium.

Excessive consumption of alcohol also reduces the body's ability to absorb calcium. Heavy drinkers also tend to consume fewer calcium-rich foods.

Protecting your bones is more than just taking calcium supplements and preventing falls. Consuming foods rich in calcium and Vitamin D, regularly participating in weight bearing exercise, and choosing healthy lifestyles are all key factors in reducing osteoporosis.

Information obtained from: "Bone Up On Diet and Osteoporosis" by Donna Montgomery, MS, Consumer Foods and Nutrition Specialist (retired)

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