

Hope & Healing

Osteoporosis Prevention

A heart at peace gives life to the body — Proverbs 14:30

Introduction _____

About 24 million Americans have osteoporosis. Many do not know it. They are not all old. They are not all women, but most are.

Women have smaller bones than men. Women lose bone faster after they reach menopause, because they produce less estrogen.

But, we can prevent thin and weak bones. And, if you already have osteoporosis, your bones can be made stronger.

Who Will Get Osteoporosis? _____

Osteoporosis is the “silent destroyer” and predictions that you will or will not get it aren’t perfect. To be certain about the risk, your bone-density must be measured.

If you are a woman 35 to 50, check the categories below. Then, check with your doctor about what to do when you find areas of concern if:

- your family originated from Northern Europe or the Orient.
- you are light skinned.
- you have a slender body frame.
- a family member has osteoporosis.
- you haven’t had children.
- you went through menopause early.
- you have rheumatoid arthritis.
- you have diabetes that requires insulin.
- you don’t drink milk.

- you take in excessive caffeine.
- you chronically diet to be very thin.
- you exercise to the point of not having periods.
- you smoke.
- you use excessive alcohol.
- you are sedentary.
- you chronically take cortisone, Dilantin, Lasix, blood thinners, or antacids containing aluminum.

Taking Stock of Your Bones _____

Osteoporosis suddenly announces itself when a rib breaks from a trivial cough or a sudden turn snaps a wrist bone. To know in advance — to help you prevent osteoporosis — ask your doctor about a dual-energy x-ray bone density measurement (DEXA). Most specialists recommend that you do this around age 45. The cost may be \$125 to \$350. And some insurance companies won’t pay for it.

Preventing Osteoporosis _____

We have many weapons in our arsenal to prevent osteoporosis. Here are the major ones:

1. Exercises to build bone.

Studies show this to be a crucial step for every woman over 30. But, you’re never too old to begin. Even 80 and 90-year-olds have been shown to become stronger and more confident exercise program. A specific exercise method is presented in another healthnote.

2. Get plenty calcium. Women need 1,000 milligrams of calcium a day before menopause and 1,500 mg. after, for strong bones.

Step 1. Daily add up the foods with 300 mg. or more per serving. Average your intake for the week.

Calcium heavyweights:

- 1 cup Lactaid 1% fat calcium-fortified milk — 500 mg.
- 2 one-ounce slices nonfat cheese — 400 mg.
- 1 cup plain nonfat yogurt — 400 mg.
- 1 cup fruit-flavored nonfat yogurt — 300-350 mg.
- 1 cup nonfat milk — 300 mg.
- 1 cup calcium-fortified orange juice — 300 mg.

Don’t count the calcium in kidney beans and broccoli or other vegetables, just the heavyweights.

Step 2. Subtract your actual calcium intake from the recommended intake. For most women the difference is at least 500 mg. If you can’t make up the difference with your eating, it’s time to look at supplements.

There are so many varieties of supplements on the shelf. For many women Calcium Carbonate will fit the bill.

- It’s cheap.
- It’s readily available.
- You won’t need a jillion tablets.

Calcium Citrate is another popular choice.

Three supplements to avoid; they may have too much lead.

- Bone meal.
- Dolomite.
- Calcium Carbonate identified as "natural source" or "oyster shell."

To see how many tablets you need, check the label for milligrams of elemental calcium per tablet. Then, subtract the milligrams of calcium you get in your diet from the total milligrams you need and make it up with supplements. Avoid taking more than 500 mg calcium in supplements at one time; spread it over the day.

Test your calcium tablets in a glass of warm water. They should break apart in 1 hour. If not, they may not break apart in you.

Other calcium tips:

Fortify soups and casseroles with powdered nonfat dry milk. Each teaspoonful contains about 50 mg., and no fat. Make soup from bone stock, using a little vinegar to leach out the calcium from the bone. Eat salmon, tuna, nuts, and tofu for calcium.

Getting Enough Vitamin D _____

Make sure you get 400 to 800 international units of Vitamin D per day. You can do this in 3 ways:

- Stay outdoors more for the sunlight. It makes Vitamin D in our skin.
 - Drinking Vitamin D in milk (100 IU per cup).
 - Taking a multivitamin supplement containing 400 IU per day.
-
- Also, your doctor can measure a Vitamin D level and guide you on the amount you need to take.

Remember: Don't rely on supplements alone. Calcium and Vitamin D from food is best. It is absorbed better and other nutrients come with it.

Other Tips for Preventing Osteoporosis _____

- Restrict alcohol to 1-2 drinks a day. It reduces bone formation.
- Don't smoke. It lowers estrogens.
- Limit caffeine, no more than 2-3 cups of coffee a day. It increases calcium loss in the urine.
- Limit red meat. It causes calcium loss.
- Watch fiber. Too much will cause calcium loss.
- Go easy on salt. It causes calcium loss.
- Watch soft drinks. They contain phosphorus which carries off calcium.

Preventing Falls and Fractures ____

Every year 250,000 Americans fracture a hip and many persons never regain their strength. 12 to 20% of those over age 65 will die within a year. Avoid hip fractures:

- When you stand, hold to a table if you are unsteady.
- Wear shoes with soft rubber soles to avoid slipping.
- When sitting at a table, lean forward, supporting your arms, and resting your back.
- Don't twist suddenly. If you drop something, get up and pick it up.
- At home, avoid throw rugs, use night lights, and leave walking space between furniture.

Summary _____

Do what you can to prevent osteoporosis. Take calcium, Vitamin D, and exercise.

Awaken the Miracles Within You

The Miracle of Confidence in Yourself

Jack, the Dragon Killer, could slay dragons galore because he had a magic word that kept him safe.

You have a magic word yourself — *confidence*.

Confidence is the magic word of all human personality. Here are ways to increase your confidence:

1. Practice having an interested face. Never appear bored.
2. Be warm and cheerful to everyone.
3. Choose your words carefully about yourself.
4. Choose well your friends. Avoid negative thinkers.
5. Avoid TV, news, depressing books and music.

The recommendations and information in this handout are appropriate in most cases. However, for specific information concerning your personal medical condition, please, consult your doctor.