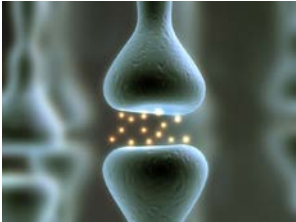


Keep Your Bones Strong

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Osteoporosis is often called a “silent” disease because people cannot feel their bones getting weaker. Nearly 10 million Americans have



osteoporosis and almost 34 million more have low bone density, putting them at increased risk for osteoporosis and broken bones. The National

Osteoporosis Foundation (NOF) has developed themes, messages and activities that increase the awareness of and action related to osteoporosis. There are many things you can do to make your bones stronger and keep them strong.

Tips to eat smart and stay active:



Calcium counts. Calcium helps keep your bones strong and is used for nerve function and muscle movement. If you don't supply enough calcium to meet the

body's needs, your body will take calcium from your bones. According to the NOF, adults under age 50 need 1000 mg of calcium a day. If you're age 50 or older, aim for 1200 mg daily.



Sources of calcium.

Natural sources include dairy products such as milk, cheese, and yogurt. Calcium-fortified foods include juices, cereals,

breads, rice milk, or almond milk. Other foods include canned fish (sardines, salmon with bones) soybeans and other soy products (tofu made with calcium sulfate, soy yogurt, tempeh), some other beans, and some leafy greens (collard and turnip greens, kale, bok choy). Calcium that can be



Calcium supplements. For those who absolutely cannot get enough calcium in their diet, doctors may encourage calcium supplements. However, to achieve the maximum benefit from

supplements, they must be properly used. For example, supplements that contain Vitamin D are preferred. And, since the body can only absorb 500 mg of calcium at a time, it is important to follow dosing instructions carefully. Some calcium supplements must be taken in conjunction with food and others may be taken at any time of the day.



Vitamin D is vital.

Vitamin D is needed to absorb the calcium consumed and helps

with muscle performance and balance. Without enough vitamin D, bones can lose mass and weaken. According to the NOF, adults under age 50 need 400-800 IU (international units) of vitamin D daily. If you're 50 or older, you need 800-1000 IU.

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Sources of vitamin D. One source of vitamin D is through exposure to sunlight. The skin makes vitamin D from the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays. Dietary sources include cod, salmon, tuna, swordfish, sardines, egg yolk, and liver. Vitamin D can also be found in fortified foods such as milk, orange juice, cereal, and yogurt. Before buying a supplement, check the labels of supplements you currently take; many already have vitamin D.



Staying active. Did you know certain forms of exercise can build bone density and slow bone loss? The NOF recommends getting 30 minutes of weight-bearing exercise (such as dancing, walking, low-impact aerobics, and gardening) on most days of the week and strengthening exercises (such as free weights, weight machines, or elastic exercise bands) two to three times a week. Other types of exercise, such as balance and posture exercises like tai chi or yoga, can help decrease the risk of falls and broken bones.

Risk factors. Certain people are more likely to develop osteoporosis than others. See the full list at <http://www.nof.org/node/40>. Many factors include:

- Being female
- Older age
- Family history of osteoporosis or broken bones
- Low estrogen in women, including menopause
- Missing periods (amenorrhea)
- Low levels of testosterone and estrogen in men
- Diet low in calcium and vitamin D
- Excessive intake of protein, sodium and caffeine
- Inactive lifestyle
- Smoking
- Drinking too much alcohol
- Medications such as steroid medications, some anticonvulsants and others
- Certain diseases and conditions such as anorexia nervosa, rheumatoid arthritis, gastrointestinal diseases and others

Approximately 1 in 2 women and up to 1 in 4 men over age 50 will have an osteoporosis related fracture in their lifetime. And, although many consider osteoporosis to be an older

person's disease, it can strike at any age. Talk to your healthcare provider about your chances of getting osteoporosis, and ask when you should have a bone density test done.

Additional Resources & Links:

- **Tai Chi: Movement for Health Benefits.** Check out these videos and information on Tai Chi to reduce stress and improve balance. http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/more_fnh_videos_7
- **Calcium and Vitamin D pdf.** Calcium and Vitamin D work together to keep the body healthy and build strong bones. http://food.unl.edu/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=3bff7f8b-cd49-4e05-a106-4871c0bc42d3&groupId=4091401
- **Know My Bones Program.** The goal of this program is to help women who have postmenopausal osteoporosis keep bones strong. http://www.knowmybones.com/about_kmb/index.html
- **Osteoporosis Quiz.** Test your bone health knowledge with this osteoporosis quiz at: http://www.knowmybones.com/bone_health_resources/osteoporosis_quiz.html
- **American Bone Health.** Check out this websites for a fracture risk calculator, helpful resources, video library, and recipes. <http://www.americanbonehealth.org/>
- **National Osteoporosis Foundation.** Learn more about osteoporosis, about the Foundation, community, events, awareness, and advocacy at: <http://www.nof.org/>

Sources:

1. National Osteoporosis Foundation. Fast Facts. 2011. <http://www.nof.org/node/40>.
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This Newsletter has been peer reviewed