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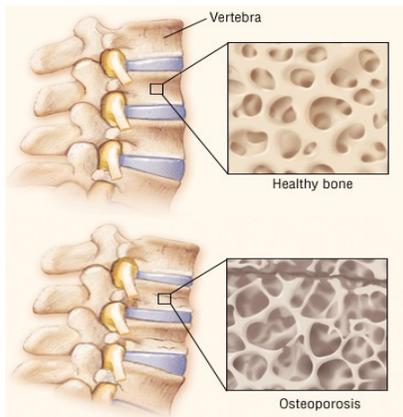


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NATIONAL OSTEOPOROSIS PREVENTION & AWARENESS MONTH

More than 28 million Americans either have osteoporosis or are at high risk because of low bone mass. Osteoporosis has become an epidemic in the United States, and the number of people with low bone mass keeps growing.



What is it? Osteoporosis is a chronic, progressive, bone-thinning disease that leads to painful fractures, loss of height and independence, and can even lead to death. Don't confuse osteoporosis with arthritis and wait for swollen joints and discomfort before being tested. Osteoporosis is painless until a bone fracture occurs, so it's important to find out how healthy your bones are NOW.

Prevention is Key Contrary to popular belief, it is not an inevitable part of aging, but is a preventable disease for most people. Osteoporosis prevention begins in childhood. It is critical to reach peak or maximum bone mass early in life and to maintain that bone mass later in life, to help prevent osteoporosis. Even so, it's never too early or too late to start your prevention program. Here are some basic steps you and your family can take to prevent osteoporosis.

Nutrition and Supplementation Inadequate calcium is thought to contribute to the development of osteoporosis. Depending on your age, an appropriate *calcium* intake falls between 1000 and 1300 mg a day. If you have difficulty getting enough calcium from the foods you eat, try a calcium supplement to make up the difference. Without enough *vitamin D*, you will be unable to absorb calcium from the foods you eat, and your body will have to take calcium from your bones. Vitamin D comes from two sources: through the skin following direct exposure to sunlight and from diet. Experts recommend a daily intake of at least 800 IU per day. While exercise, calcium, and adequate vitamin D are the most important, research has identified additional nutritional options, including the trace minerals *zinc* (15mg/day), *copper* (2 mg/day), *manganese* (5 mg/day), extra *magnesium* (250-600 mg/day), and *vitamin K* (90 mcg/day).

Decrease consumption of foods high in phosphorus, such as soda, potato chips, hot dogs, bacon, beer, biscuits, crackers, white rice, liver, bologna and peanuts. Too much phosphorus decreases absorption of calcium and other minerals and weakens the bone.

Exercise

Exercise is also important to good bone health. Bone is living tissue that responds to exercise by becoming stronger. Just as a muscle gets stronger and bigger the more you use it, a bone becomes stronger and denser when you place demands on it. If your bones are not called upon to work, such as during physical activity, they do not receive any messages that they need to be strong. Thus, a lack of exercise, particularly as you get older, may contribute to lower bone mass or density. You cannot see your bones respond to exercise, but when you strike a tennis ball or land on your feet after jumping, chemical messengers tell your arm and leg bones to be ready to handle that weight and impact again. In fact, if you x-ray the arms of a tennis player, you would see that the bones in the playing arm are bigger and denser than the bones in the other arm. Two types of exercises are important for building and maintaining bone mass and density: weight-bearing and resistance exercises.

Weight-bearing exercises are those in which your bones and muscles work against gravity. This is any exercise in which your feet and legs are bearing your weight. Jogging, walking, stair climbing, dancing, and soccer are examples of weight-bearing exercise with different degrees of impact. Swimming and bicycling are not weight-bearing.

Resistance exercises or activities that use muscular strength to improve muscle mass and strengthen bone. These activities include weight lifting, such as using free weights and weight machines found at gyms and health clubs. Most weight-bearing and resistance exercises place health demands on bone. Daily activities and most sports involve a combination of these two types of exercises. Thus, an active life-style filled with varied physical activities strengthens muscles and improves bone strength.

Chiropractic Can Help!

Talk with your doctor of chiropractic about risk factors and ways to improve the health of your bones. Doctors of chiropractic are licensed and extensively trained to treat patients of ALL ages and they can help people suffering from osteoporosis lead healthier lives.