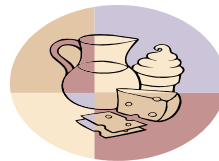


Women's Bone Health and Calcium



Osteoporosis is a disease where bones are fragile, porous, and break easily. *It is a disease that begins in your youth but does not display its symptoms until you are older.* Osteoporosis causes hip, spine and wrist fractures and causes older women's curved, hunched over appearance. *While many women are at risk for osteoporosis, it is preventable!*

Peak (greatest) bone mass/density occurs between the ages of 18 - 30. After age 30, women begin to lose their bone mass. This process speeds up greatly after menopause as estrogen levels drop off. One of the best ways to prevent osteoporosis is to consume *lots* of calcium during your adolescence and young adulthood while engaging in weight bearing exercises (e.g. walking) on a regular basis. That way the calcium you consume will be deposited in your bones. ***Young women, who drink diet sodas instead of milk, thinking it will help keep them from gaining weight, are making a big mistake!*** *Not only are they setting themselves up for osteoporosis, but adequate dietary calcium intake has been proven to be one of the best ways to keep from gaining weight!* **Important Note: Women who receive Depo-Provera injections may be at increased risk of developing osteoporosis and are strongly advised to pay close attention to their daily dietary calcium intake and to take additional calcium supplements.**



Dairy products provide the richest source of readily available calcium in the diet. Select low fat or no fat dairy products. ***Calcium fortified juices are now available and are also a good choice!*** Another way to add calcium to your diet is to take calcium supplements but read the label as they come in different doses (e.g. Caltrate 600, Oscal 500, TUMS regular 200mg.). Calcium carbonate is the best form of supplement. One with vitamin D added (up to 400 IU daily) is even better. Vitamin D helps to increase the absorption of calcium from the digestive tract and helps to deposit calcium in your bones. Avoid supplements made from oyster shells. It is also best to spread out calcium intake over the day (and take supplements twice a day with food rather than one big dose). The digestive tract can only absorb a certain amount of calcium at a time.

The Dietary Reference Intakes for Calcium in Women

Ages 9 through 18 = 1,300 mg. daily
Ages 19 through 50 = 1,000 mg. daily
Pregnant and breast feeding women:
Ages 14-18 = 1,300 mg. daily
Ages 19 - 50 = 1,000 mg.



Good Dietary Sources of Calcium

1 cup of low fat yogurt = 350 to 400 mg.
1 cup of fat free milk = 300 mg.
1 oz. (size of your thumb) mozzarella cheese, part-skim milk or cheddar cheese = 200 mg.
1 cup regular ice cream = 176 mg.
1 oz. American cheese = 170 mg.
1/2 cup of almonds = 152 mg.
1 cup of low fat cottage cheese = 140 mg.
1 cup of baked beans = 130 mg.
1 cup of broccoli = 71 mg

Is your daily calcium intake adequate?

If not, take steps today to improve it - because it's never too late to make a positive change!