

Osteoporosis – the “Silent Disease”

Although osteoporosis can occur at any age, it mainly affects people over age 50. According to the National Osteoporosis Foundation, about 54 million Americans have osteoporosis or low bone mass and half of women and one in four men over the age of 50 will break a bone as a result. For many, the first sign of osteoporosis is when a bone breaks. Osteoporosis is called the “silent disease” because there are few, if any, noticeable warning signs.

What exactly IS Osteoporosis? Osteoporosis literally means “porous bone”. It is a bone disease that occurs when the body loses too much bone, makes too little bone, or both. As a result, bones become weak and may break from a fall, or in serious cases, even from minor bumps.

What can I do to lower my risk of developing Osteoporosis? Bones are constantly under “construction”. Certain cells break down bone tissue and other cells use the calcium and other nutrients from food you eat to build new bone. If you are not getting the nutrition you need your bones will suffer by becoming less dense, weaker, and more likely to fracture. Calcium is the major nutrient needed for new bone cells. Our bones store 99% of the calcium in our bodies! Eating calcium rich foods daily help to minimize bone loss. Vitamin D is a nutrient that helps your body to absorb calcium and supports the muscles you need to avoid falls. However, it is often difficult to get all the vitamin D you need from food alone. Talk to your doctor about supplements if you think you are not getting enough from your diet. Vitamin K, potassium, and magnesium work alongside these nutrients as well to increase bone density and strength.

How much Calcium and Vitamin D do I need?

- Adults ages 19 to 50 need at least 1,000 milligrams of calcium a day.
- Women over age 50 and men over age 70 need at least 1,200 milligrams of calcium a day.
- Women and Men Under age 50: 400-800 international units (IU) of Vitamin D daily **
- Women and Men Ages 50 and older: 800-1,000 IU of Vitamin D daily

***Some people need more vitamin D. According to the Institute of Medicine (IOM), the safe upper limit of vitamin D is 4,000 IU per day for most adults.*

What are some good food sources of nutrients needed to support bone health?

<u>FOOD</u>	<u>NUTRIENT</u>
Dairy	
Dairy products such as low-fat and non-fat milk, yogurt and cheese	Calcium/ Vitamin D if fortified
Fish	
Canned sardines and salmon (with bones)	Calcium
Fatty varieties such as salmon, mackerel, tuna and sardines	Vitamin D
Fruits and vegetables	
Collard greens, turnip greens, kale, okra, Chinese cabbage, dandelion greens, mustard greens and broccoli.	Calcium
Spinach, beet greens, okra, tomato products, artichokes, plantains, potatoes, sweet potatoes, collard greens and raisins.	Magnesium
Tomato products, raisins, potatoes, spinach, sweet potatoes, papaya, oranges, orange juice, bananas, plantains and prunes.	Potassium
Red peppers, green peppers, oranges, grapefruits, broccoli, strawberries, brussels sprouts, papaya and pineapples.	Vitamin C
Dark green leafy vegetables such as kale, collard greens, spinach, mustard greens, turnip greens and brussels sprouts.	Vitamin K
Fortified Foods	
Calcium and vitamin D are sometimes added to certain brands of juices, breakfast foods, soy milk, rice milk, cereals, snacks and breads.	Calcium, Vitamin D

Sources: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and National Osteoporosis Foundation (NOF)