HEALTHY BONES, HEALTHY YOU

Healthy bones are so important for your overall wellness and quality of life! Bone diseases like osteoporosis make your bones weak and brittle, and they can strip you of your height, posture, mobility and independence. **80% of Americans with osteoporosis are women, and one in two women aged 50 and older will break a bone because of osteoporosis.** What's more concerning is you can't feel osteoporosis happening!

Thankfully, there are things you can do to help prevent osteoporosis *(primary prevention)* and also protect your bones from fractures and breaks if they have already started to weaken *(secondary prevention)*.

Osteoporosis risk factors:

Uncontrollable: age*, gender, small body frame/low weight, ethnicity (white women have highest risk), medical history (thyroid problems, eating disorder, liver or kidney disease, inflammatory diseases), low estrogen (late onset puberty, ovary removal, early menopause), family history

Controllable: lack of calcium and vitamin D, lack of exercise, smoking, alcohol

Your body stops making new bone and starts losing it with age. You reach peak bone mass by age 30 (peak amount varies by person depending on nutrition and exercise during adolescence), and you start taking from that bone in your mid-30s. The most dramatic decrease happens at menopause.

Preventing osteoporosis (primary prevention):

Get enough calcium and vitamin D. Calcium and vitamin D are key for building strong, dense bones and keeping them strong.

Age:	Calcium/day:	Age:	Vitamin D/day:
adult <50	1,000 mg	adult <70	600 IU
50+	1,200 mg	70+	800 IU*
Sources of calcium: dairy products (milk, yogurt, cheese), certain green vegetables and nuts/seeds, calcium-fortified foods, supplements**			
Sources of vitamin D: sunlight, fatty fish, fortified foods, supplements**			

*up to 4,000 IU per day is safe for most adults
**Ask a health care provider if you need a supplement, and which type/dose is right.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
National Institutes of Health: nia.nih.gov/health/exercise-physical-activity
Bone Health and Osteoporosis Foundation: bonehealthandosteoporosis.org
Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging: wihealthyaging.org/programs/falls-prevention-programs

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('Preventing osteoporosis' continued)

Exercise. Exercise makes bones and the muscles around them stronger. Do weight-bearing exercises like squats, walking, lifting weights, climbing stairs/elliptical, resistance bands, etc. 2-3 times/week.

Avoid smoking, and limit alcohol. Avoid smoking or try to cut back or quit. Limit alcohol to one drink/day.

Preventing fractures (secondary prevention):
In addition to above strategies, **Know the status of your bones.** A bone density test called DXA is recommended for women over the age of 65 or women ages 50-65 who have risk factors for osteoporosis. *Try the Osteoporosis Risk Check too:* riskcheck.osteoporosis.foundation

Prevent falls. Wear shoes with good traction, use handrails on stairs, keep areas well-lit and free from clutter, cords, and rugs, use non-skid mats in the shower or tub, and use a walker/cane as needed.

Consider medication. Speak to a health care provider about medications that can help slow the breakdown of bone.

Wisconsin Women's Health Foundation
608-251-1675 x 118 | wwhf.org

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