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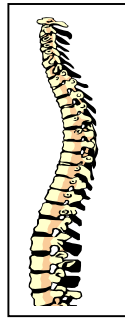
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Understanding Osteoporosis

What is Osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis literally means “porous bones”. It is a condition in which the bones of the body lose mass and become brittle and porous.



Who is affected?

Over 28 million men and women over the age of 50 have decreased bone mass or osteoporosis. Eighty percent of those affected are women.

What are the factors that increase your risk of developing osteoporosis?

- female
- over 65 years of age
- small, thin build
- early menopause (before age 45)
- family history of osteoporosis
- Caucasian/Asian races
- poor nutrition (especially calcium)
- lack of exercise
- smoking
- excessive caffeine consumption
- excessive alcohol consumption
- certain medical conditions
- certain medications such as thyroid medications, anti-convulsive medications, or cortisone-like medications

How can you prevent osteoporosis?

Women can lose up to 20% of their bone mass in the 5-7 years following menopause. Men lose .5% of their bone mass starting at 40-45 years of age.

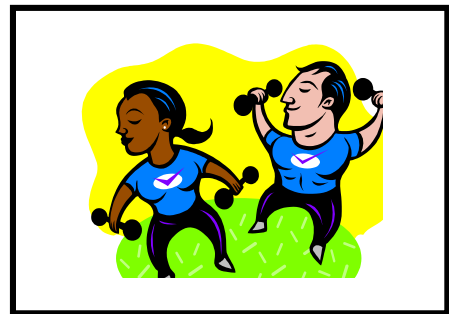
To prevent loss of bone mass you can:

- Decrease risk factors listed previously.
- Eat foods rich in calcium and vitamin D.
- Participate regularly in weight bearing exercises regularly. Activities such as walking, jogging, and dancing are suggested.
- Resistance exercises such as weight lifting or the use of resistance bands are also recommended.
- Regular check-ups and yearly bone scans to detect the early signs of osteoporosis.

****Be sure to check with your doctor or physical therapist before beginning a new exercise program.**

Suggestions for those with Osteoporosis

- Weight bearing exercises and resistance exercises such as those mentioned previously for prevention are also recommended if you have osteoporosis.
- Vertebral or spinal fractures are the most common fracture associated with osteoporosis. To prevent this type of fracture, avoid postures that flex the trunk such as toe touches, sit ups, or knees to chest. Also, avoid activities that twist the spine such as golf, tennis, and bowling.
- Good posture can help minimize the effects of osteoporosis. It is important to be aware of your posture in sitting, sleeping, and standing. Remember to align your ears over your shoulders and your shoulders over your hips.
- Over 1/3 of those over the age of 65 fall each year. Osteoporosis complicates a fall by increasing the risk of a fracture. It is important to modify your environment and activities to prevent falls.
- Stretching is important in maintaining good posture and preventing abnormal strain on your bones. Visit a physical therapist for specific stretches that could be beneficial.
- When lifting groceries use plastic bags with handles. Also, have them packed lightly and carry them close to your body to prevent any strain on your back.



For more information about osteoporosis call your doctor or physical therapist or visit www.apta.org