

BONE DENSITY

A GROWING PROBLEM AS WE GET OLDER

Many people, especially the baby boomers have experienced low bone density, osteopenia or osteoporosis, which affects thousands every year. Most people don't even know they have a problem until some traumatic event occurs that requires treatment. Most treatments come too late including medications and nutritional protocols. The key is early testing and intervention.

Over \$14 billion is spent each year on osteoporosis health care. Only about 50% of people know they have osteoporosis. Osteoporosis of the hip affects about 60% of women over the age of 50. Most people do not understand bone density or how to treat the condition. It is not as simple as taking more vitamin C, D, Calcium, eating or drinking more dairy or taking medication. Sadly, in the US, we drink more dairy products, but suffer more bone demineralization issues than any other country. Prevention must be a combination of nutrition, exercise, and if needed medications. Too much Calcium in your diet can also be bad for you, as increased calcium deposits resulting from a diet rich in dairy and reduction in magnesium rich foods (green leafy vegetables) can exacerbate osteoarthritis.

Many drugs for preventing bone demineralization are less attractive than just consuming more dairy. The most effective drugs for this condition are bisphosphonates, which prevent bone loss by inducing natural death of osteoclast cells, which reabsorb bone. This destroys the natural balance of bone deposition and resorption, which is a process which keeps the bone matrix strong and healthy. Uses of this class of drugs have been found to have unusual incidents of hip fractures from brittle bones and bone loss from other areas of the body.

Our bodies have either an acid or alkaline environment based upon the foods we eat, which called pH balance. A diet that is low or acidic can prevent, slow down healing of bone. An alkaline rich diet can increase bone deposition. Alkaline foods are vegetables and fruits, while acidic foods are sugars, processed foods and meats.

Our bone health requires a balance of calcium and magnesium. Magnesium aids in the absorption of calcium. Acidic foods tend to cause the body to lose magnesium in the urine and not making it available with calcium.

Exercise is also important, but which type? Resistance exercise affects bone health, which is weight training. This type of training contracts muscles and uses a full range of motion and has been shown to help maintain bone density. These simple strategies will help maintain good bone health.

1. Develop a habit eating Polyunsaturated fats (plant origin foods)
2. Complex carbohydrates (naturally occurring foods)
3. Resistance exercise (weight training)
4. A superior supplement that contains calcium and magnesium
5. A simple rule is to eat foods that are plant origin. Remember the next time you are in a store shopping for food keep these rule in mind. If you can pull it from a tree or pull it from the ground, these are the foods you need to eat.

Keep away from saturated fats (animal source foods) and simple carbohydrates (refined or processed foods). In addition to your bone health, these types of foods tend to increase your chance of getting Type 2 diabetes. Eating even small amounts of these foods (about 1.8 ounces is linked to a 51% increase in the risk of type 2 diabetes. (Harvard School of Public Health Study published in August 2011, American Journal of Clinical Nutrition).

These types of foods also increase inflammation in the body, contributing too many other potential health problems including cardiovascular disease. A way to reduce inflammation in the body is a natural source of omega-3 fatty acids, and according to a new study, can help reduce both inflammation and anxiety (University of Ohio study).

Study suggests that daily doses of omega-3 supplements provide 4-5 times the amount of fish oils found in a daily serving of salmon, reduced the anxiety of a group of medical students. In the study 68 medical students participated in the study that showed that stress related examinations lowered student's immune status. In the study 34 students received omega-3, which showed a 14% decrease in inflammation promoting compounds called cytokines. Inflammation can foster disease like arthritis, cancer and heart disease. This study was published online on July 19, 2011 by the journal Brain, Behavior and Immunity. Taking omega-3 supplements and eating cold water fish 2 times per week. Taking fish oil capsules on omega-3 can also help, but make sure the capsules contain both EPA and DHA acids.

Eating foods that promote increased body fat, inflammation, can cause diseases like cancer, diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular diseases and can elevate you bad cholesterol (LDL's) Stay away from food that are saturated fats (red meats, dairy, shellfish, organ meats, cheese. Also stay away from simple carbohydrates (refined or processed foods, sugars chocolate. Simple carbohydrates have very little nutritional value and can really increase your body fat levels, percentage of body fat, and BMI ratio.

Bone health is a growing problem as we get older, but we can still have healthy bones in your golden years if you follow some simple rules as I have outlined in this article.

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