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Nutrition

Nutrition and bone health

Osteoporosis is a chronic, debilitating disease whereby the density and quality of bone are reduced. The bones become porous and fragile, the skeleton weakens, and the risk of fractures greatly increases. The loss of bone occurs "silently" and progressively, often without symptoms until the first fracture occurs, most commonly at the wrist, spine and hip. Approximately one out of three women over 50 will have a fracture due to osteoporosis (more than breast cancer) as will one out of five men over 50 (more than prostate cancer). Although genetic factors largely determine the size and density of your bones, lifestyle factors such as good nutrition, regular exercise, and avoiding smoking and excess alcohol also play a key role.



At every stage of life a nutritious, balanced diet promotes strong, healthy bones. A good diet includes sufficient calories and adequate protein, fat and carbohydrates, as well as vitamins and minerals - particularly vitamin D and the mineral calcium. In childhood and adolescence, good nutrition helps to build

peak bone mass (maximum bone density, attained in the 20's) thereby reducing vulnerability to osteoporosis later in life. In younger and older adults, a nutritious diet helps preserve bone mass and strength. And in those who have had a fracture, it speeds and aids recovery and reduces the risk of having another fracture. Varied and enjoyable eating habits, including calcium-rich foods, are a recipe for a lifetime of strong bones and the high quality of life that comes with them.

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