STOP THE silent thief

PREVENTING OSTEOPOROSIS

Serenity Aberdour, ND

You have heard it called “the silent thief.” You remember a friend whose mother or grandmother was never the same after breaking her hip because of it. You may even have been told that you are at risk yourself.
More than 2 million Canadians are currently living with osteoporosis.

It is osteoporosis, a bone disease that most of us know about, but it's one that we may not fully understand. What is it exactly? Why does it happen? Who is at risk? And what can be done?

Here we provide an overview of what you need to know to better understand what osteoporosis is, if you are at risk, and what steps you can take to help support the health of your bones.

**WHAT IS OSTEOPOROSIS?**
Osteoporosis is a condition in which bones become thin and filled with holes (hence the “porous”), making them weaker and more prone to fracture. Approximately one in four women and one in eight men are at risk of developing osteoporosis once they are over 50 years of age. More than 2 million Canadians are currently living with it.

**WHAT CAUSES OSTEOPOROSIS?**
Bone is constantly undergoing a process known as remodelling. During remodelling, bone material is broken down and rebuilt in an ongoing cycle in which small damages to the bone are repaired and minerals are released and distributed to other cells in the body.

In healthy bone the cells that break down bone (osteoclasts) and the cells that build new bone (osteoblasts) work together to balance bone breakdown (resorption) and bone formation.

In osteoporosis something in this delicate balance goes awry and resorption occurs in excess of formation. There is no single cause of this imbalance, and it likely occurs in different people due to different sets of circumstances.

Most therapies aimed at preventing or treating osteoporosis are aimed at slowing down bone resorption and/or providing necessary nutrients to support bone formation.

**WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?**
Many people who develop osteoporosis do not even know that they have it until they break a bone. Common fracture sites in people with osteoporosis include the spine or hip.

Wrist are another common site of osteoporotic fracture, likely because when most of us fall, we instinctively put our hands out to break the fall (unfortunately, if you have osteoporosis, you could be breaking a lot more).

Once someone with osteoporosis suffers a fracture, their overall health can decline significantly, particularly in the case of hip fractures. Osteoporosis Canada reports that osteoporosis-associated hip fractures result in death (due to complications) in up to 30 percent of cases. That’s an alarming statistic, and one that should cause us all to consider the health of our bones.

**WHAT TO DO?**
Know your risk

The first step toward reducing your risk of osteoporosis is to learn what your risk factors are. In the world of osteoporosis risk, there are things that you can change and things that you can’t. Know the
240 hours of testing and research every week
Our full-time laboratory is staffed with
1 PhD, 3 MSc and 2 BSc

All ingredients tested 3 times for
identity, purity, PCBs, heavy
metals, potency, 37 pesticides,
aflatoxins, and microbiology

Actual laboratory at New Roots Herbal

Why choose Candida Stop

• Choose the natural effective way to conquer Candida

• Will give you a healthy, fresh clean feeling

• Candida symptoms include loss of energy, lack of mental focus, & loss of endurance

• Our special program contains 10 natural Candida fighters. It also helps kill fungus, bacteria and parasites while combating bloating, gas and headaches.

Risk factors for osteoporosis include:
• being female
• being over 60
• being sedentary
• being Asian or Caucasian
• being underweight (BMI of 19 or less)
• having a family history of osteoporosis
• having certain medical conditions including hyperthyroidism, Crohn's disease, celiac disease, or other digestive problems that can significantly impair calcium absorption
• smoking
• low dietary calcium intake
• chronic intake of more than two alcohol-containing drinks per day
• chronic intake of more than three cups of coffee a day
• long-term use of certain medications including corticosteroids, methotrexate, anti-seizure medication, some antidepressants, aluminum-containing antacids, and proton pump inhibitors

Use it or lose it

Bone is a living tissue that remodels itself continually. As we go about our business, our bones are being gradually broken down and rebuilt by our bodies. How strong a bone is built depends, in part, on how strong it needs to be.

Bones that have to carry a load stay stronger, longer. If you do not subject your bones to the stress of weight-bearing activities, you will gradually lose bone mass. Just ask an astronaut. In the weightlessness of space, astronauts can lose as much bone density in one month as postmenopausal women lose in one year.

Rate of loss may be slower here on earth, but the same rule applies: if you don't use your bones, they won't stay strong.

So get out there and play. Seek activities that put stress on the bones; this encourages the body to lay down new bone during the remodelling process. Some of these activities include:
• hiking
• walking
• running
• weight training
• yoga
• dancing
• jumping rope
• stair climbing
• tennis

Get outside

The sun is our greatest source of vitamin D. But between work, family, and a variety of indoor commitments, we can't all get outside as much as we need to. This can lead to an increased risk of inadequate vitamin D.

Vitamin D supports bone health by helping the body to absorb calcium. It also plays a role in maintaining muscle...
strength—and stronger muscles, particularly as we age, mean a decreased risk of falling, which reduces the risk of fracture.

Because many parts of Canada do not get adequate sunshine year round, and because many of us may not spend enough time in the sun even when it is shining bright, supplementing with vitamin D is a good idea. A safe dose for most people to take regularly is 1,000 IU per day.

Ask your health care practitioner to check your vitamin D levels, and have a discussion about where your levels are and where they should be to support bone health.

Bone-healthy diet
A nutritious diet is an important foundation for healthy bones. Several nutrients are required to build bone, and a diet rich in variety will help you to obtain as many of these nutrients as possible.

Most of us are aware of the importance of calcium and calcium-rich foods, but the body needs other nutrients to build healthy bones.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUTRIENT</th>
<th>WHERE TO FIND IT</th>
<th>WHY IT'S IMPORTANT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protein</td>
<td>too much animal protein has been associated with bone loss; emphasize a mix of animal and vegetable proteins</td>
<td>bones are built on a frame of protein; without enough protein, bone health can suffer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vitamin C</td>
<td>found in most fruit and many veggies</td>
<td>required to make collagen, part of the protein matrix on which bones are built</td>
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<tr>
<td>Copper</td>
<td>found in many foods, including whole grains, nuts, legumes, and leafy greens</td>
<td>important for the formation of collagen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin K</td>
<td>found in leafy green vegetables, some fermented foods, and made naturally by intestinal bacteria</td>
<td>helps bones to use calcium properly</td>
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Not-so-bone-healthy diet
While many foods support bone health, there are also several foods that may promote bone loss, and it is just as important to make sure that you do not get too much of these in the diet.

USE IN MODERATION

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>High salt intake increases calcium output in the urine, calcium that your body has to replace. To do this, the body naturally turns to its largest calcium store, the bones. So be mindful of how much salt you are shaking over your food. You may also consider using natural artisanal salts containing minerals, particularly those which include potassium, a mineral that has been shown to reduce sodium-induced loss of calcium in the urine.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caffeine</td>
<td>High intake of caffeine (more than 300 mg per day, equivalent to 18 oz/530 mL or more of coffee) has been shown to accelerate bone loss in post-menopausal women. Keep in mind that those ever-popular energy drinks are also loaded with caffeine, and therefore not a bone-friendly choice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>Although occasional and social intake of alcohol does not present any significant risk to bones, chronic intake of more than two alcoholic beverages per day may increase osteoporosis risk.</td>
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<td>Refined, processed, canned foods</td>
<td>These foods contain very little of the nutritional value found in whole foods such as whole grains, legumes, nuts, and fresh fruits and veggies. As a result, they tend to be low in the minerals needed to build healthy bones.</td>
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</table>

Butt out!
These days it is well known that smoking is not good for health; smoking increases the risk of several cancers, cardiovascular disease, and respiratory diseases. But it may surprise you to know that smoking is also associated with an increased risk of osteoporosis.

Various researchers have shown that smoking leads to increased bone loss and that smoking cessation may even result in increased bone density in women. Not only does smoking weaken bones, but it can also delay bone healing (bad news if you are already at increased risk of osteoporotic fracture) and damage cartilage.

THE IMPORTANCE OF STAYING ALKALINE

Mammals, including humans, can survive only in a very narrow range of the pH scale, about 7.35 to 7.45. Very small variations in blood pH can be tolerated; but any major, uncontrolled fluctuations and we are in for serious trouble. As a result, our bodies work very hard to limit any dramatic changes in our pH.

Calcium happens to be a rather effective neutralizer [or buffer] of acidity. Therefore, if our blood starts to get a little too acidic, calcium is leached from the bones in order to help restore a more desirable pH.

Some theorize that diets (or illness, or medication, or even lifestyle) that promote an acid state in the body tend to promote bone loss, whereas alkalizing foods tend to decrease bone loss.

Alkalizing foods include the usual elements of a healthy diet:
- mineral-rich whole foods (whole grains, fruit, veggies)
- leafy green vegetables
- foods rich in potassium (dried fruit, legumes, chicken, cod or halibut, avocados, bananas, cantaloupe)

Some studies are indicating that alkali mineral waters may also help to reduce bone resorption by reducing the impact of acidity.

Now that you know a little bit more about what osteoporosis is, what the risk factors are, and some tips for prevention, consider sitting down with your health care practitioner to determine your own risk of osteoporosis.

Once you know your risk, take action through diet, lifestyle, and supplementation as required, to reduce your risk. It is never too early—or too late—to start taking positive steps toward better bone health.

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