

THE TRUTHS ABOUT OSTEOPOROSIS: Bone Loss, Diet, Exercise, And The Fact Men Are Not Immune

The word “Osteoporosis” means porous bones. "It is a condition where bones become thin and lose their strength, as they become less dense and their quality is reduced. This can lead to broken bones, which cause pain, disability, and make everyday activities extremely difficult". ([Paper](#)) Osteoporosis affects both men and women. 1 out of every 3 women and 1 out of every 5 men over the age of 50 will suffer from Osteoporosis. Although more women than men are affected, more men will die from the disease than women within the first 5 years, approximately 50% of the men and 30% of the women.

Osteoporosis is often referred to as the “silent disease” because people don’t often know they have it until they break a bone. So how do we get this “silent disease” and how do we prevent it? First, there are risk factors that we cannot control, being female, white or Asian decent, small boned and a family history, but even having these risk factors does not mean the disease is inevitable. One way is through our diets, and more specifically, calcium. Calcium is used in our bodies every day. We use it for all kinds of metabolic functions. Our heart, nervous system and muscles all require calcium to function. Our bones require it for growth and strength.([Paper](#)). We get our calcium from the foods we eat. It is absorbed from the gut and stored and used in the bones. As we age our ability to absorb the calcium declines. The body likes to have a homeostatic amount of calcium available in the blood at all times. If this falls short because of our lack of calcium in the diet, our declining ability to absorb it, or both, then the bones will release calcium in order to keep peace within the body. Thereby weakening the bone.

Another way to prevent bone loss besides calcium in our diets, is,,, wait for it..... YUP, Exercise!!! Specifically weight bearing exercise. According to Wolff’s Law (Julius Wolff, German anatomist and surgeon) our bones will adapt based on the stress or demands placed on them. The stress put on the bones with weight bearing activities cause the bones to adapt and get stronger. Also, the opposite is true as well. If the stress on the bone is reduced it will become weaker. ([Paper](#))

So ladies (and men) be smart about your health. Don’t assume because things “look good” on the outside that everything is copacetic on the inside. Here is a little side note: Health Literacy is the ability to acquire, process, understand and communication health information in order to make healthy decisions about oneself. Believe it or not almost 90% of the US population is health illiterate. My point....be health literate. Know your bodies, take care of your health as a whole, and the rest is gravy.....