

The Effects of Diet and Exercise on Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis affects more women who smoke, have small bones, post-menopausal or who are “under-weight.” Osteoporosis is the loss of bone density and requires proper treatment. The first, and most obvious treatment is to choose weight-bearing activities such as weight training or aerobic exercises with small hand weights. Many women are afraid of building large, bulky muscles. This cannot happen unless a large quantity of food is taken in along with extremely heavy weight training. If you choose to begin weight training as a source to increase bone density, find a qualified professional in your area to take you through some total body conditioning workouts. First time exercisers can seriously injure themselves if the movements are not performed correctly.



Next, increase the amount of calcium you are taking in. Many doctors will recommend that women over the age of 35 should take a calcium supplement even if they exercise on a regular basis. Your body will take what it needs from the supplement and eliminate the rest. Post menopausal women may want to consider estrogen therapy. Lower estrogen levels can cause a decrease in bone density. There is a concern for women who have irregular menstrual cycles because their bodies might not be producing enough estrogen. If this is your problem, consult your physician.

Here are some food sources to increase the calcium in your diet:

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| * skim milk | * shrimp |
| * buttermilk | * sardines |
| * low-fat yogurt | * oysters |
| * frozen yogurt | * broccoli |
| * 2% cottage cheese | * parmesan cheese |

Be sure to read the hand-out called “The 5 time per day healthy eating plan” to get an idea of how you should structure your daily meals. Add the necessary foods listed above to make sure you are getting enough of the calcium you need.

Last but not least, if you smoke - quit! Nicotine in cigarettes is a contributing factor in bone density reduction. Also, smoking hinders exercise, which is needed to increase bone mass and of course deteriorates your most important muscle- your heart.