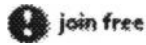




Osteoporosis



Osteoporosis-DIRECT

Reduce Osteoporosis Risk

Each year osteoporosis affects more than half of all women over age 45. It affects a smaller percentage of men and causes more than 1.5 million fractures to vertebrae, wrists and hips, according to the Arthritis Foundation.

An article in Arthritis Today, the Arthritis Foundation's national consumer magazine, says steps can be taken at any age to reduce the incidence of osteoporosis, or bone loss. The article also points out that many of these same strategies used to reduce risk can be used as treatment by those who already have osteoporosis.

"Now is always the right time to reduce your risk of osteoporosis and the problems it can cause," says Arthur Grayzel, M.D. the foundation's senior vice president for medical affairs. "If you are young, you can help reduce your risk of bone loss by getting enough calcium, avoiding other risk factors such as smoking, or excessive use of alcohol, and exercising regularly. If you already have osteoporosis, you can slow the loss of bone with diet, exercise and if you are a woman, with hormone replacement therapy."

The Arthritis Foundation urges people of all ages to be aware of the following causes of osteoporosis:

1. Diet Deficiencies: Calcium is the single most important influence on how dense bones become, and consuming adequate amounts of calcium is important at all stages of life. Getting enough vitamin D also is important, because

it helps the body use calcium efficiently.

2. Estrogen Deficiency: In women, the highest rate of bone loss occurs around the time of menopause when the ovaries stop producing estrogen. Estrogen replacement therapy begun shortly after menopause can slow bone loss and reduce the risk of fractures by up to 50 percent.

3. Lack Of Exercise: When it comes to building strong bones, the old adage "Use it or lose it" applies. Regular weight bearing exercise, such as walking and jogging, is best

4. Other Factors: Other lifestyle factors, including cigarette smoking and excessive alcohol use, also can increase the risk of bone loss.

Source: The Arthritis Found&ion March 3, 1994