

What Can We Do To Prevent Osteoporosis?

Continued from Page 6

regulation of heartbeat. Premenopausal women need 1000 mg of calcium, postmenopausal women not on hormone replacement need 1500mg and all women over 65 need 1500mg. Generally, we can get 500mg of calcium from food. Vitamin D is essential for both calcium and phosphorus absorption and it promotes bone mineralization. Research demonstrates that vitamin D prevents falls and decreases hip fractures. It is well known that here in the northwest, we are typically deficient in Vitamin D. I recommend that everyone get their vitamin D levels checked and supplement according to individual need. Other

vitamins and minerals that play an important role in bone health include magnesium, vitamin K, vitamin C, B vitamins, manganese, silicon, zinc and copper. Magnesium is essential for calcium metabolism. Food sources of magnesium include kelp, wheat bran, nuts, tofu and apricots. Vitamin K is required for osteocalcin, which is a protein matrix where mineralization occurs. There are a number of products available with a combination of vitamins and minerals necessary to maintain bone mineral density. There is some evidence that elderly patients low in DHEA showed an increase in bone mineral density with supplementation. I would suggest that you consult your health care practitioner

to determine which product best meets your needs. There has been some controversy as to whether vitamin A causes a decrease in bone mineral density. In light of the controversy, I would recommend that you choose a multiple vitamin with a low dose of vitamin A and supplement with Beta Carotene. There are times when an individual will need to treat osteoporosis with medications. Raloxifene is an estrogen agonist/antagonist and the other class of medications most often prescribed are the bisphosphonates, a common one is alendronate or Fosamax. When a woman has vasomotor symptoms and chooses hormone therapy,

estrogen will prevent bone loss. There is some data that show an association of hotflashes and night sweats with lower bone mineral density. It is in early menopause that we are most at risk for bone loss. There is some recent evidence that microdose transdermal estradiol is effective in preventing bone loss at the lumbar spine. There are new ideas and options on the horizon. Remember to think about your bone health, stay active and enjoy

being engaged in life. *Moirá Fitzpatrick is a licensed naturopathic physician who specializes in women's healthcare. She is also a clinical psychologist and integrates health and mental health. She practices in the Northgate area of Seattle and can be reached at (206) 525-5576, drfitznd@comcast.net or www.theemeraldcenter.com.*



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