



The Emily Program

The eating disorder specialists

Osteoporosis and Calcium

Osteoporosis is a condition in which bones become weak and makes bones more likely to break or fracture. Osteoporosis strikes women far more than men. Osteoporosis is sneaky, as there are no warning signs, and it is often diagnosed only after a bone breaks. There is no cure for osteoporosis, only ways to improve bone health and strength. Osteoporosis is preventable through healthy diet, adequate calcium intake, exercise, and careful living.

Risk factors for Osteoporosis include: female, small frame, Caucasian or Asian descent, age, certain medications like anti-coagulants, steroids or Thyroxine, inactive lifestyle, malnutrition, smoking, early onset menopause, and other medical conditions such as eating disorders.

How can I prevent Osteoporosis and protect my bones?

- Consume adequate amounts of calcium and vitamin D
- Weight bearing activity, if allowed in your care plan
- Personal safety: take care on snow and ice, on stairs, and in the shower/tub. Be mindful of electrical cords, throw rugs, and other objects which may create tripping hazards.

Calcium:

Calcium is the building block of bones, and necessary for proper functioning of your heart, nervous system, and blood clotting. Calcium is also needed to maintain teeth and collagen, which protects connective tissue and skin. Vitamin D helps the intestine absorb calcium. Calcium is more effective when taken with vitamin D.

The daily recommended amount of calcium is 1000-1200 mg/day. Do not take more than 500 mg of calcium at any one time, as your body cannot absorb more than this amount. Take calcium supplements separate from a multivitamin to prevent problems absorbing the calcium.

Best sources of calcium:

- Dairy products
- Broccoli
- Salmon
- Tofu

Best sources of vitamin D: Found in few foods naturally, mostly found in fortified products

- Vitamin D fortified milk
- Eggs
- Herring
- Salmon
- Sunlight

Calcium supplements: Best and easiest to absorb is calcium citrate (Crticial). Calcium carbonate is more difficult to absorb (Tums, Viactiv, Caltrate). Calcium gluconate, calcium lactate or coral calcium are NOT recommended.

Additional resources on Osteoporosis:

National Institute of Health (NIH): http://www.niams.nih.gov/Health_Info/Bone/Osteoporosis/osteoporosis_hoh.asp

Mayo Clinic: <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/osteoporosis/basics/definition/con-20019924>