

MEN'S HEALTH

Men Can Get Osteoporosis, Too

(NAPSA)—Most people don't think that men develop osteoporosis. This disease, in which bone becomes thin and fragile and can fracture easily, is mostly associated with women. But men can get the hip and other bone fractures that come with osteoporosis, too—and it's just as painful or debilitating.

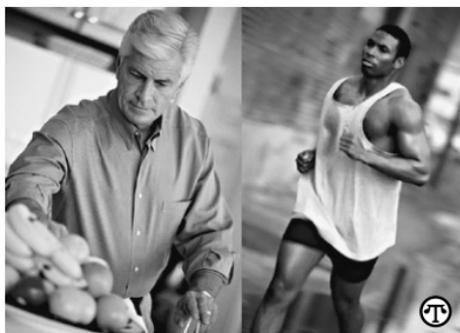
Men are usually diagnosed with osteoporosis only after they have fractured a bone. By age 65 or 70, men are losing bone mass at the same rate as women. More than half of all men who suffer a hip fracture go from the hospital to a nursing home, and 79 percent of those who survive for one year still live in nursing homes or intermediate care facilities.

Men are more likely to have a high risk of fracture due to secondary causes, like a specific disease (such as celiac disease) or taking medications that can affect bone mass (like the steroids used to treat asthma, rheumatoid arthritis and other diseases).

Knowledge of the diseases and conditions that affect bone mass can help to prevent men as well as women from reaching the point of fracture before diagnosis. The National Institutes of Health now has a major study under way to investigate various aspects of osteoporosis in men.

Treatment and Prevention

Getting enough calcium is very important for preventing osteoporosis. Adults 19 to 50 years old need 1,000 milligrams (mg) of calcium every day; those over 50 need 1,200 mg. The best way to get enough calcium is through your diet. Buy fortified orange juice and cereals, and eat



Eating the right foods and exercising can help prevent osteoporosis.

lots of green leafy vegetables and low-fat dairy products like cheese, milk, ice cream and yogurt.

You should also get enough vitamin D. If you spend 15 minutes outside in the sun each day, your body should make enough on its own. If you have limited sun exposure, scientists currently recommend 200 to 400 international units (IU) if you are under age 70 and 600 if you are over.

It's also important to do regular weight-bearing exercise, such as walking, jogging, stair-climbing, tennis, weight training and dancing. These exercises strengthen bones and help with balance. That will reduce the risk of falling and thus reduce the chances of breaking a bone.

For men with osteoporosis, doctors prescribe most of the same medications that they give to women. Be sure to talk with your doctor about your options.

For more information about osteoporosis, go to www.osteoporosis.org, or contact the National Institutes of Health Osteoporosis and Related Bone Diseases~National Resource Center at 800-624-BONE or osteoinfo@osteoporosis.org.