

Osteoporosis: What You Need To Know

(NAPSA)—For decades, mothers have told their children to “Finish your milk. It helps build strong, healthy bones.” We should listen up, because moms know what they’re talking about—that it’s important to get an early start on developing healthy bones.

Although it’s natural for bone density to decrease over time, millions of Americans suffer from a severe form of bone loss known as osteoporosis. The disease, which literally means “porous bones” in Latin, weakens bone mass and makes individuals more susceptible to fractures during a fall or accident.

According to the National Osteoporosis Foundation (NOF), around 10 million Americans have osteoporosis, 8 million of whom are women. And another 27.2 million women are estimated to have low enough bone mass to be “at risk” for the disease. Osteoporosis primarily afflicts women after menopause and some elderly men as well. The good news: It’s preventable through diet, exercise and a healthy lifestyle.

For those 10 million Americans who already live with osteoporosis, experts stress the importance of adhering to doctor-prescribed medications to help manage the disease. According to recent data released by CVS Caremark, women with osteoporosis between the ages of 18 and 64 who were not on therapy were 5.7 times more likely to experience a fracture. The research indicates that individuals who take and remain adherent to approved osteoporosis therapies are better able to maintain their mobility and quality of life while avoiding costly fractures.

Those living with osteoporosis can also help slow bone loss by making the following lifestyle changes:



People over 50 should consume 1,200 mg of calcium a day.

- **Eat a diet rich in calcium and vitamin D.** For calcium, consume green leafy vegetables and dairy products. For vitamin D, experts recommend eating fortified products (e.g., cereal and milk) or foods naturally loaded with vitamin D, including salmon and eggs.

- **Take a walk in the sun!** Sunshine provides natural vitamin D, so try to soak in at least 10-15 minutes of sunlight a day. The goal is to get direct sunlight to the arms and face at least three times a day.

- **Exercise.** Weight-bearing exercise such as running, walking and dancing is proven to slightly increase bone density and also increase your strength and balance to avoid falls.

- **Cut out bad habits.** Don’t smoke and keep alcohol intake to a minimum. Both have been associated with osteoporosis.

Finding Help

For more information about osteoporosis, visit the NOF Web site (www.nof.org) and also the Health Resources section of the CVS Caremark Web site at www.caremark.com.