

Like clockwork

from Dr. Laura Corio, M.D.

Women's Health Issues

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Beyond Bone Basics

By now most women know they become more susceptible to osteoporosis as they age. They also know they should get plenty of vitamin D, calcium and magnesium to bolster the density of their bones. But what they may not know is that there are some lesser known supplements that can be just as important for maintaining bone health and that they should consider taking as well. Read on to see if any of this information enlightens you.

Stontium

This is a supplement you've probably never heard of unless you happen to be chemistry major yet it's been used therapeutically for more than a century. I'm recommending it for bone health because it is safe to take and studies have shown it to be an effective treatment for osteoporosis. For example, in one three-year, randomized, double-blind, controlled trial women suffering from osteoporosis who took a daily dose of strontium experienced a 41 percent reduction in risk of a vertebral fracture. In fact, vertebrae density in the strontium group increased by 11.4 percent yet there was a 1.3 percent decrease in the placebo group. The most effective form and dose seems to be about 680 mg of strontium citrate in capsule form taken about 2 hours after eating and at least 4 hours away from calcium so the 2 minerals don't compete.

Boron

Boron helps the body maximize the use and storage of vitamin D, calcium and magnesium. In an interesting study, postmenopausal women ate a boron-deficient diet for 119 days, followed by 48 days of boron supplementation. On the boron-depleted diet, the participants demonstrated increased urinary loss of both calcium and magnesium. On the boron-supplemented diet, however, they showed less urinary excretion of calcium and magnesium, as well as increased levels of two hormones associated with healthy bone mass. The take home message is that adequate boron intake is essential to preserving the body's stores of bone-building calcium and magnesium. You probably don't need to supplement for boron, just make sure to eat plenty of boron rich sources such as fruits, veggies and legumes.

Vitamin K

According to the NIH, vitamin K can not only increase bone mineral density, it can actually reduce your chances of fracturing a bone. It strengthens bones by helping to create a protein that binds calcium, rather than let the calcium pass out of your system. The Institute of Medicine recently has increased the dietary reference intakes of vitamin K to 90 microg/d for females and 120 microg/d for males, which is an increase of approximately 50% from previous recommendations. Excellent dietary sources include spinach, Brussels sprouts, Swiss chard, green beans, asparagus, broccoli, kale and mustard greens.

Vitamin Ex

Hardly a newsletter goes by where I don't put in a plug for exercise. There's a good reason for that. Exercise is truly a wonder drug and the fact that it's good for your bones should come as no surprise. Exercise that is the most beneficial to your bones is weight bearing, meaning you support your weight as you do it. So, activities like walking, jogging and dance help maintain strong bones and muscles. Weight training is also key for building bones and you should be aiming for three sessions a week; yoga or Pilates is a suitable substitute for weight training. I myself run and do Pilates on a regular basis.



Vitamin Ex

Aim for 3 weight training workouts a week or substitute with yoga or P



Dr. Corio's Resources

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PEARLS

The Question: Is dairy really a good source of calcium?

Dr. Corio Says: Believe it or not, low fat dairy products are actually higher in calcium than the full fat versions. Low fat yogurt, for example, has less calcium than non-fat yogurt – 415 mg. vs. 450 mg. per cup – while whole milk yogurt has just 274 mg. A half-cup serving of part-skim ricotta has 337 mg. of calcium vs. 257 mg. in whole ricotta. That's because non-fat products often are fortified with dry milk solids. One real surprise is that cottage cheese is a poor source of calcium. A one-cup serving of 1 percent fat cottage cheese has a mere 138 mg. of calcium. The bottom line is that you need to check labels to see what you're eating. You also need to keep in mind that certain foods and beverages deplete calcium by interfering with absorption. Salty foods such as bacon, salami, smoked salmon, prepared soups, salty snacks and other processed food are big culprits which is why I strongly recommend you consume less than 4,000 mg. of sodium a day. Cola has phosphoric acid that blocks calcium absorption, while too much caffeine and alcohol actually depletes calcium and damages bones.

The Question: Are men at risk for osteoporosis too?

Dr. Corio Says: Men in their fifties don't typically experience the rapid loss of bone mass that women do in the years following menopause. But by about age 65 or so, men and women lose bone mass at the same rate, and the absorption of calcium, an essential nutrient for bone health throughout life, decreases in both sexes. Fractures resulting from osteoporosis most commonly occur in the hip, spine, and wrist, and can be permanently disabling. Hip fractures are especially dangerous. Perhaps because such fractures tend to occur at older ages in men than in women, men who sustain hip fractures are more likely than women to die from complications. Men with osteoporosis often have it as a result of a secondary cause such as medication, alcohol abuse, disease or poor lifestyle choices. With the growing number of overweight or obese men, doctors are seeing more osteoporosis in men and at a younger age.

Sources: WebMD, NIH.gov, ABCnews.com

Doctor & Office Hours

Doctor's Hours

Monday	12:00 PM-6:00 PM
Tuesday	9:00 AM-3:00 PM
Wednesday	9:30 AM-2:30 PM
Thursday	8:00 AM-2:00 PM

Office Hours

Monday	10:00 AM-5:00 PM
Tuesday – Friday	9:00 AM-4:00 PM

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News Flash

That cola habit is more than just bad for your weight – it also eats away at your bones. Study after study has found that cola leaches mineral density – so much so that one large study including more than 2,500 people found that women who drank any type of cola on a regular basis showed a bone mineral density that was 4-5 percent lower in their hips than women who never drank cola. This is true whether they drank regular or diet. Researchers aren't clear what it is about cola in particular since they found that other bubbly drinks don't do nearly the same damage to your bones. It could be the caffeine, the phosphoric acid, the high fructose corn syrup or some other unidentified compound found in cola – they simply can't yet say for sure. So in the meantime, give your bones a break and get your bubbles elsewhere.