



Bone Health & Osteoporosis

Client Name _____

Dietitian _____

Phone _____ Email _____

What is osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis is a loss of bone tissue that causes weak bones and increases the risk for fractures and breaks. Bone loss can occur for several years before symptoms appear. You may not know you have osteoporosis until you fracture or break a bone.

Are you at risk?

The following factors increase the risk of bone loss:

- Women aged 65 and older
- Family history of osteoporosis or non-traumatic fractures
- Females with a history of amenorrhea (absent menstrual cycle)
- Females who are past menopause
- History of low calcium and vitamin D intake
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Low body weight
- Health problems such as hyperthyroidism or rheumatoid arthritis
- Habits including smoking and excessive consumption of alcohol

Tips for Bone Health

Get adequate calcium in your diet. Calcium is a mineral that helps build strong bones. A diet low in calcium may cause a decrease in bone density leading to osteoporosis.

In addition, your body needs calcium for normal muscle function. A diet rich in calcium may also help prevent high blood pressure and decrease the risk of colon cancer.

Daily Recommended Intake of Calcium (DRI)	
Age	DRI
9-18	1,300 mg/day
19-50	1,000 mg/day
51+	1,200 mg/day
Postmenopausal	1,500 mg/day

Women need more calcium after menopause. During menopause, estrogen production decreases. Estrogen helps the body to absorb calcium. Postmenopausal women not on hormone replacement therapy can benefit from a daily calcium intake of 1,500 mg.

Eat calcium-rich foods. Milk, yogurt, and cheese are among the best sources of calcium. You can also find calcium in dark-green, leafy vegetables; tofu processed with calcium; sardines; legumes; almonds; seeds; and fortified foods such as cereal or orange juice. Your body absorbs calcium best if you eat calcium rich foods throughout the day.

Good Food Sources of Calcium

Food source	Serving Size	mg Calcium
Milk	8 oz	285-300
Yogurt	8 oz	350-450
Cheese	1 oz	115-200
Calcium fortified foods	8 oz	200-300
Dark green, leafy vegetables	1 cup	50-100
Nuts and Seeds	1 oz	25-75

You might need a calcium supplement. Calcium is best absorbed from food. However, if you are not consuming enough calcium in your diet, supplements help you get the calcium you need to maintain strong bones. It is important to take your supplement either with or right after a meal. The acid in your stomach helps to dissolve the calcium so your body can absorb more of it.

Get adequate amounts of vitamin D. Vitamin D is another key nutrient for bone formation and maintenance. It is important to eat foods rich in vitamin D and have adequate sunlight exposure for vitamin D production. Without adequate sun exposure, adults require approximately 800 to 1,000 IU per day. Good food sources include fortified milk, fortified cereals, fish, cheese, eggs, mushrooms, and butter. Many calcium supplements have vitamin D added—check the label.

Quit smoking and avoid excessive alcohol. Smoking increases bone loss. Studies have shown that excessive amounts of alcohol increase your risk for osteoporosis.

Maintain a healthy weight and begin a regular exercise regimen. Being underweight increases your risk for osteoporosis. Improve your muscle strength and bone density with weight-bearing exercises such as walking, running, or weight training.

You may need medications to prevent or decrease bone loss. Talk with your doctor about medications that can help decrease bone loss, and ask if they are appropriate for you.