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A Natural Approach to Bone Health by Steve Lankford

Osteoporosis is a major health concern for all women. Osteoporosis is a silent and progressive condition where bone destruction is greater than bone construction. Women have been done a disservice with the concept that all you need for bone health is calcium and any calcium will do. Bone health is in fact a very complex process that should not be over simplified.

The purpose of this podcast and article is not to define the perfect program but rather to help you understand your choices. The more you know, the better able you are to make effective choices.

There is a strong correlation between pre-menopausal bone density and the risk of osteoporosis. The stronger your bones are prior to menopause can be a significant factor. Therefore the sooner you begin a bone support program the better. A recent two yearlong study showed the pre-menopausal women who took at least 1000 milligrams of calcium increased bone density by 1.6% while women who took no calcium lost 3.2% of the bone density in their spine.

There is also compelling evidence that lifestyle and dietary choices are important. One of the major contributors to bone loss is soft drinks. Soft drinks are high in phosphorus and when the diet is high in phosphorus and low in calcium, the result is that calcium is depleted from the bones. Other dietary factors include a high protein diet, high salt intake, and trace mineral deficiencies. Caffeine, alcohol and smoking all increase your risk.

Don't forget the importance of exercise. Movement, especially weight bearing exercise, is critical. Our bodies build bone in relationship to the weight bearing demands we place on them.

The first step on the path to bone health is to assess your current health status. Your approach toward health will differ depending on your age and health. It is never too late to start and you will achieve the best results by a strategy that fits your requirements.

Some of the areas that will influence your choices and decisions are the following:

Are you pre, peri, or post-menopausal? The older you are the more important it becomes and the earlier you start the better your long term prognosis. There are many factors which increase your risk and you should be familiar with those risk factors and how they affect you.

Are you on a limited budget? Do not be discouraged if you cannot afford the most complete program. It is important to find the program that you can afford and stick with over the long term.

Do you want a basic approach or a comprehensive approach? Even the most basic program you continue is better than doing nothing. If you take a comprehensive approach, so much the better.

Are you prepared to take a long term approach to bone health? Maintaining strong bones takes a lifetime.

Do you want guidance and support as you develop your program? Find a doctor or health food store that understands your issues and is able to work with you. You have many options and you should find a provider that offers the knowledge and service that is important to you.

Get Tested: One of the most important tools that you have are the tests which either reveal bone density or the rate of bone loss. Your first test will establish a baseline against which you can measure how well your program is working. Over the years, re-testing will enable you to evaluate and adjust your program.

Developing a nutritional program that works.

When you realize the relative importance of your choices then you can focus on what is important to you. The more information you have the better choices you can make. Choose your program based on a balance of the factors that are most important to you. Cost, potency, formulation, number of supplements are important considerations. The more nutrients you take, and the more comprehensive your program, the more it will cost and the more tablets or capsules you will take.

We do not have all the answers regarding calcium and bone health, but our understanding is growing. Do not be discouraged by this apparent lack of consensus. Make your choice based on your best understanding and as you continue to learn more, you can always adjust your program.

Calcium

There is an ongoing debate about how much calcium to take, and what form of calcium is best. You don't have to look very far to discover a wide range of opinions on the subject. Past dosage recommendations suggested a range of calcium from 1000 to 1500 milligrams. Emerging science suggests that we need lower amounts of more highly absorbable calcium. It is suggested that higher levels of calcium may have negative consequences.

Different types of calcium are absorbed at different rates. My suggestion is to look for calcium citrate, amino acid chelate, or krebs cycle chelates such as fumarate, malate, succinate and aspartate as these have higher rates of absorption. Another emerging form of calcium is Hydroxy Appitite calcium from bone. Calcium carbonate is a common form of calcium that has a lower rate of absorption but can be acceptable, especially if expense is a factor. However calcium is only one of at least 22 nutritional factors that influence bone density. A good bone support program will include vitamins D3, K2, B6 and folate as well as the minerals magnesium, boron, strontium, zinc, copper and silicon.

Vitamin D3

The benefits of vitamin D are extensive and you can learn much more from our podcasts on vitamin D. The most important consideration is to make sure you are using vitamin D-3 which is the most active form. You also want to maintain a dosage range of 2000 to 5000 per day. Have your vitamin D blood levels checked and adjust from there. Your goal is to have a blood between 50 and 80 nanograms per milliliter.

Vitamin K2

Vitamin K2 has important benefits for bone health. K2 aids in the transports of calcium into the bones. You are seeing many more bone support formulas including vitamin K2. There is another important benefit of K2 and that is that it helps keep calcium from depositing into your arteries. This is an important cardiovascular benefit.

Strontium

Strontium is a mineral that is even used as a treatment for osteoporosis in some other countries. The dose is 680 mg. per day. The trick is that strontium competes with calcium when taken at the same time. So always take your strontium separate from your calcium supplement.

BioSil

BioSil is a special form of silica that has been clinically shown to build the collagen matrix that supports bone growth.
Collagen

Ipriflavone

There is a nutrient that every woman who is at risk should know about. Ipriflavone is a derivative of soy isoflavones. Ipriflavone is often sold under the name Ostivone. Ipriflavone has been studied for over twenty years and is used in Japan and Europe as a treatment for osteoporosis.

The recommended amount of ipriflavone is 600 milligrams per day. Recent studies have verified that ipriflavone can prevent bone loss and can even contribute to an increase of bone density. Ipriflavone works by increasing the activity of bone building cells and decreasing the activity of bone destroying cells.

Hormones

Doctor John Lee is credited with discovering the bone building properties of progesterone cream. Natural progesterone cream has been shown to rebuild substantial amounts of lost bone. Dr. Lee's studies show a 10 percent increase in bone density in 6-12 months using a 3 percent progesterone cream. Side effects were almost non-existent. Progesterone cream can also contribute to improvements in energy, mobility and libido. Natural progesterone cream can also provide relief from menstrual and menopausal symptoms.

You can improve your health.

The proper nutrients taken consistently over time will provide results. The more information you have the better choices you will make. Continue to learn apply what you learn. The health you have now was preceded by what you did previously. Your future health will be determined by what you do now. The choice is yours.

For more information on any of these topics visit any good health food store. They should be able to provide you with information on developing a nutritional program for bone health.

To learn more from the experts, listen to HealthQuestPodcast.com.

051 – Dr. John Cannell Discusses Vitamin D

068 – Dr. Kate Rheume-Bleue Discusses Vitamin K2

076 – Dr. Michael Holick Discusses Vitamin D

095 – Richard Passwater Discusses BioSil

Disclaimer

The information provided is nutritional only and is intended to help you develop a nutritional program that can support the functions of the body. The information provided is not intended as medical advice. For medical advice always consult your physician.