

KEEPING BONES AND JOINTS HEALTHY

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NEWS YOU CAN USE



Do Not Forget These Other Great Resources:

Healthwise® Handbook, the 24-Hour Nurse Line, Nurse Online Chat, Audio Health Information Library® and you can go online to www.express-health.com for links to reliable health information.

Challenge:

Make sure you are getting the recommended amount of calcium and vitamin D each day by looking at your food sources and consulting your doctor about appropriate supplements.

Sources:

<http://www.arthritis.org>

<http://www.nof.org/>

http://www.usbjd.org/projects/NAW_op.cfm

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Bone and joint conditions are the most common cause of severe long-term pain and physical disability worldwide. Nearly half of all Americans over age 18 are affected with a musculoskeletal condition.

ARTHRITIS

Arthritis is a family of musculoskeletal disorders. A few of the most common forms include: osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, fibromyalgia, and gout.

Osteoarthritis is the most common type characterized by achy, stiff and painful joints that get worse throughout the day. It comes from years of wear and tear on the joints that break down the cartilage cushioning the joints. It may start as a soreness or stiffness with moderate pain that does not interfere with your day-to-day activities, but can develop into a very painful and debilitating condition.

OSTEOPOROSIS

Bone is living, growing tissue that is constantly going through a process of making and building bone. Bone provides structure, protects organs and anchors muscles. Did you know that 98 percent of your bone mass is formed before the age of 20? After that, bone formation drops off and we begin to lose bone. That means the rest of our life is spent trying to hold on to bone mass.

Osteoporosis is a disease of the bones. It occurs when bone loss greatly exceeds new bone formation causing bones to become weak and fragile. Osteoporosis is often diagnosed following a minor fall that breaks a bone that otherwise wouldn't break.

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- Maintain a healthy body weight. Being underweight makes bones less strong and being overweight puts extra stress on the joints.
- Exercise. It strengthens the muscles surrounding the joints to give them more support. Weight-bearing exercise will also strengthen bones keeping them from losing mass.
- Get plenty of calcium and vitamin D. Calcium is not absorbed without vitamin D so you need both to get the benefit. Generally, 1000mg of calcium and 800IUs of vitamin D a day is recommended but discuss appropriate amounts for you with your doctor.
- Avoid smoking. Nicotine and toxins in cigarettes affect hormones involved in keeping bones healthy.
- Limit alcohol use. Drinking heavily can lead to bone loss.
- Women age 65 and over and men age 70 and over may benefit from a bone density test.
- Prevent falls by knowing your medication side effects that could affect balance, such as dizziness or sleepiness. Also, keep your home safe by clearing walking paths from things that could be tripped on, such as rugs or electrical cords.
- Sit and stand. Sitting all day or standing all day is not easy on the body.
- Learn safe techniques for lifting heavy objects. This includes keeping a wide base of support and leading with your hips. When possible, use assistance and don't force your body into awkward positions.
- Avoid injury and overuse of joints. Injuries to a joint and repetitive motion make you more susceptible to developing osteoarthritis.