

## **Adventist Healthcare: Health Tip of the Week**

### Osteoporosis

An estimated 10 million Americans have osteoporosis and almost 34 million more have low bone density. One in two women and one in four men (over age 50) will have an osteoporosis-related fracture in her/his remaining lifetime. Osteoporosis (porous bone) is a disease characterized by low bone mass and structural deterioration of bone tissue. This leads to bone fragility and an increased susceptibility to fractures, especially of the hip, spine and waist. Osteoporosis is responsible for more than 1.5 million fractures annually. It is often called "the silent disease" because bone loss occurs without symptoms. People may not know they have osteoporosis until their bones become so weak that a sudden strain or fall causes a fracture or a vertebra to collapse.

### Risk Factors

- \* Estrogen deficiency such as early menopause (before age 45) or absence/cessation of menstrual periods (greater than one year)
- \* Prolonged corticosteroid therapy
- \* Maternal family history of hip fracture
- \* Being thin and/or having a small frame
- \* Chronic disorders such as anorexia nervosa, liver disease and hyperthyroidism
- \* Personal history of fracture (after age 50)
- \* Low lifetime calcium intake

### Detection

A bone mineral density (BMD) test is a painless/noninvasive scan that measures bone density in the hip, spine, wrist, heel or hand. All women 65 and over and postmenopausal women under age 65 who have one or more risk factors should take a BMD Test.

### Prevention

- \* Excessive caffeine consumption can accelerate bone loss by increasing calcium excretion.
- \* To absorb calcium, your body needs vitamin D. It is found in fortified low-fat dairy products and fatty, saltwater fish such as tuna and halibut.
- \* A high-sugar diet weakens bones.
- \* For every 500 milligrams of salt you consume, you lose 10 milligrams of calcium.
- \* Weight-bearing exercise and resistance training can help slow the rate of bone loss.
- \* Those who smoke have 15-30 percent more bone loss.
- \* Boron is an essential trace mineral that activates both estrogen and vitamin D. It can be found in peaches, pears and carrots.
- \* Vitamin K activates osteocalcin, a protein that holds calcium in place. It can be found in spinach, broccoli and tomatoes.

\* When you're deficient in the mineral magnesium, vitamin D isn't as effective in moving calcium into the bones. Magnesium can be found in soybeans, seeds and seafood.

Sources: National Osteoporosis Foundation, Blended Medicine by Michael Castleman, International Osteoporosis Foundation and Washington and Shady Grove Adventist Hospitals. The Health Tip of the Week is for educational purposes only. For additional information, consult your physician. Please feel free to copy and distribute this health resource.