



Integrative Health Group Newsletter

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Want to make an appointment?

Integrative Health Group is open
Monday - Thursday
8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Friday
8:30 a.m. - Noon

To schedule an appointment, call our office at
(864) 235-6788.

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About Integrative Health Group



Our intention at
Integrative Health Group

NOVEMBER 2008

Letter From Dr. Stegall....

OSTEOPOROSIS

A Real Disease Surrounded By Myths



Each year there are 1.3 million bone fractures due to people's bones becoming weak and brittle. Many people actually die from bone fractures as other complications such as pneumonia develop. Statistics show that 20% of the people who suffer osteoporotic hip fractures die within three months. Osteoporosis is a reality.

So why do I state that it is a disease surrounded by myths? I have many, many conversations with patients with osteoporosis and osteopenia who have been given false information that has been repeated by different sources so that it has been accepted as truth. Some of this misinformation is promoted to persuade people to fill prescriptions for synthetic hormone replacement. Some of it is promoted by the food industry to sell dairy products. Many of the myths are perpetuated by supplement companies in order to sell calcium supplements. If you are weary of people trying to sell you something with misleading and incomplete information, read this newsletter completely to understand what osteoporosis is.

is to profoundly improve healthcare in America.

We are doing that by thorough assessments and follow-ups in order to individualize meaningful and successful health-building programs for each patient. We also feel that education is a powerful tool that enables an individual to make correct choices for improved well-being.

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how it is prevented, and how it is healed.

Osteoporosis is reversible, which shocks and inspires many people when I make that statement. To state that we can rebuild depleted bone mass contradicts a major osteoporosis myth because we are also claiming to know what osteoporosis really is, how to prevent it naturally, and how to rebuild brittle bones if osteoporosis already exists.

Before listing the myths and ways you have been misled, let's first take a look at osteoporosis so you can become familiar with the many factors that contribute to it and ways to prevent it. Then you will be in a position to quickly see through the myths and know what to do to protect your health.

WHAT IS OSTEOPOROSIS?

Osteoporosis is a disease whereby bone mass is lost and results in brittle, mineral-depleted, weak bones that can easily break. It is characterized by the stooped, shriveled posture that results from the weight of the person on the depleted bone structure. People can literally lose 9 inches of their former height as osteoporosis settles their bones toward the ground due to gravity. Sometimes this stooped posture is called a "dowager's hump" as the spine compresses.

On a biochemical level, osteoporosis is an imbalance in the activity of two types of bone cells - one that is responsible for releasing calcium into the bloodstream (osteoclasts) and the second which accepts calcium into the bones (osteoblasts).

WHO GETS OSTEOPOROSIS?

Both men and women can get osteoporosis, but it affects more women because many women today have one problem or another related to the endocrine system. Female hormone imbalance interferes with the physiological ability to compensate for the body's ebb and flow of estrogen and progesterone levels. A low estrogen level predisposes her to accelerated calcium loss.

and low progesterone predisposes her to low re-absorption of calcium into the bones. The loss of calcium from the bones leaves weak and brittle bones or osteoporosis.

THE OSTEOPOROSIS EQUATION

Allopathic medicine considers the cause of osteoporosis to be "unknown". I have learned through the years that when the cause of a disease is determined to be unknown, that really means that the cause is at least one of four things:

- Nutritional
- Environmental (from pesticides or chemical pollutants)
- Iatrogenic (a disease caused by vaccinations and drugs)
- A combination of the three

Calcium is the most abundant mineral in bones, followed by phosphorus, magnesium, manganese, boron, strontium, silica, zinc, and copper. The bones hold 99% of the body's calcium and serve as a calcium reservoir from which withdrawals and deposits are made to constantly maintain essential serum calcium levels in the bloodstream. That is why we check circulating calcium with each patient visit at Integrative Health Group. Calcium is obtained from our diet. The best sources of calcium are green, leafy vegetables and fruits. The conventional dietician's recommendations of 1500 mg a day is based on outdated research based on people with diets dominated by excessive meat consumption.

Calcium is absorbed and utilized in numerous metabolic functions and can be excreted. Thus calcium activity is a dynamic system. There is an ebb and flow. It can be taken from one area of the body and put into another, then be put back again. It can be used to maintain acid/alkaline balance of the blood and discarded as a buffer to acids. It is needed by the digestive system and by the muscles, including the heart.

There is a calcium balance or a proper intake, utilization, storage and/or excretion of the mineral. With any dynamic system, there is an equilibrium around which the give and take occurs. The key to avoiding osteoporosis is to stay on the positive side of the calcium balance.

Example: Let's say a person has a dietary intake of 1200 milligrams of calcium. The calcium is ingested from scrambled eggs for breakfast, a leafy salad for lunch, a calcium tablet mid-afternoon, spring water throughout the day, milk used in a sauce for dinner, and some bread. Of this 1200 milligrams, the person absorbs 200 milligrams of bio-available calcium into the body.

Only 200 milligrams were absorbed due to factors related to calcium absorption and the different bioavailability of different kinds of calcium. In my example there is good calcium and detrimental calcium.

During the day, this person used 190 milligrams of calcium in metabolic processes, primarily to buffer acids in the bloodstream both from dietary intake and metabolic by-products. Therefore, this person is in a positive calcium balance since 200 milligrams were taken in and only 190 used, leaving a small remainder. With ample calcium available to meet all of the body's demands, there is no need for the body to take calcium from the bones for use in other areas. In this example, osteoporosis is not occurring.

But, in another scenario, a person ate a diet high in mostly meats and few vegetables. The body took in 200 milligrams of calcium that day, but used 210 milligrams to buffer the acids, which are by-products of the meat, to maintain proper pH in the blood. Without enough calcium absorbed from the diet, the body took some from the bones. In this case, the body took 10 milligrams from the bones. In this situation, there is a negative calcium balance and the person has moved a slight step toward osteoporosis unless the body can replenish the calcium taken from the bones.

An easy analogy I often use is that of a bank account. If you continue to take out more than you put in, eventually you run out. When the body runs out of proper calcium in the bones, then osteoporosis results.

There are other factors involved in bone mass such as other minerals (magnesium, phosphorus, boron, silica, etc.). There are also metabolic life cycles of building bone mass prior to age 30, but our simple scenario holds true. There is a balanced system between the thyroid, parathyroid, and kidneys in controlling calcium metabolism. But still, if you use more calcium than you take in, you will end up with a deficit.

Remember this Osteoporosis Equation:

Calcium absorbed - Calcium excreted = Calcium balance (+ or -)

Maintain calcium balance at neutral or a little better, and you maintain calcium health. Lose calcium and you overdraw.

Now for my Myths List:

Myth #1 - Once your body enters a phase of reduced ability to build bone mass, you cannot build bone mass.

Explanation: This is true only if a person medicates rather than rebuilds (through therapeutic supplementation) their exhausted glands such as the thyroid, adrenals, and sex organs.

Myth #2 - Synthetic Hormone Therapy is necessary to prevent premature aging, sagging breasts, wrinkles, and bone loss.

Explanation: No evidence. Besides, there are side effects such as cancer and bleeding. Conversely, oral bio-identical hormones (not creams) are more effective and have NO side effects.

Myth #3 - Milk is the best source of calcium.

Explanation: Much nutrition is lost in pasteurization (heating milk to about 170 degrees) because the heat kills the enzymes needed to assimilate the calcium and properly digest the milk.

Myth #4 - Tums provide calcium.

Explanation: Totally not true. Tums neutralizes the acids needed to make calcium bioavailable. Even the maker of Tums knows that the advertisement has planted this errant message without basis in the minds of unknowing consumers.

Myth #5 - Dolomite provides calcium.

Explanation: Dolomite is limestone that is mined out of the earth. This form of calcium is known as ionically-bound calcium. The body does not have an enzyme strong enough to separate the calcium in dolomite from the carbon, so it exists much like a rock. A cause of arthritis is that ionic calcium gets stored in the joints. An ionic bond is the kind that superglue makes. Calcium that the body can use has a weak bond that is easily broken.

In Summary;

- You do not have to get osteoporosis.
- It is preventable and reversible.
- Vegetables each day are necessary.
- Exercise is a bone builder.
- Avoid trans fats and hydrogenated oils.

Take supplements only from Integrative Health Group. That way, you know they are pure and without synthetics and fillers. You can have confidence that our supplements are easily digested and assimilated due to the necessary enzymes and co-factors contained within them.

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