

Osteoporosis Facts: What Asian Women Need to Know

Osteoporosis is a disease caused by loss of bone which leads to less bone strength, poor bone quality, and increased risk of broken bones. The common areas in the body affected are the hip, spine, and wrists.

- Asian and Caucasian women have osteoporosis more often than black women, due to the difference in the thickness of their bones.
- The average calcium intake among Asian women has been observed to be about half that of Western population groups.
- Asian women historically have had lower hip fracture rates than Caucasians, yet Asians have fractures of the spine or vertebrae more often than Caucasians.
- Slender women have less bone mass than heavy or obese women.

Risk Factors for Women Young and Old:

- Menopause before age 40
- Surgery to remove ovaries before normal menopause
- Not enough calcium or vitamin D in your diet
- Smoking
- Osteoporosis in your family
- Alcohol abuse
- Being thin
- Being Caucasian or Asian
- Hyperthyroidism
- Use of corticosteroids

Safety Tips to Keep Bones Strong and to Avoid Falls:

- Get enough calcium and vitamin D.
- Exercise 3-4 times a week for about 30-40 minutes. Do weight-bearing exercise such as walking, jogging or dancing.
- Don't use throw rugs in your home. This decreases your risk of tripping.
- Wear flat, rubber-soled shoes.
- Use a cane or walker if you need to.
- Put hand grips and safety mats in your tub or shower.
- Be sure stairways are well lit.
- Bend your knees to pick up things from the floor. This allows you to keep your back more straight.
- Quit smoking. Smoking makes osteoporosis worse.

Source: Osteoporosis and Asian American Women from the NIH Osteoporosis and Related Bone Diseases National Resource Center Web site. <http://www.osteoporosis.gov/docs/73.586593956.html>

Safety tips from the American Academy of Family Physicians. <http://www.aafp.com/>

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