

Osteoporosis Update

Are you getting enough Magnesium?

As you know, osteoporosis is a disease that causes bone to gradually become less dense and more susceptible to fracture. Approximately 1.5 million fractures a year are caused by osteoporosis and 10 million Americans (8 million women and 2 million men) have osteoporosis. After the age of 75, this disease affects 89 percent of all women. When it comes to prevention, calcium supplementation is well known and rightly deserves the limelight. Magnesium, however, also deserves some attention as it helps the body to absorb and regulate calcium making it important for strong bones.

Chances are you are not getting enough magnesium in your diet. It is found in foods Americans just don't seem to eat enough of: leafy green vegetables, legumes, and nuts. Processed foods also contain less magnesium as the processing strips vital nutrients such as magnesium from foods that would otherwise contain this vital ingredient. Experts recommend if you take calcium supplement combine it with magnesium – look for a combination supplement in your local store. You should not exceed 400 mg of magnesium a day as it can lead to diarrhea.

The best way to prevent osteoporosis is to reduce your risk in your younger years (particularly adolescence). It is never, however, too late to make a difference.

Premenopausal women need at least 1000 mg of calcium a day.

Adolescents, pregnant and breastfeeding women need at least 1200 mg of calcium a day. Vitamin D is also essential – it can be found in many foods now and in fact drinking two glasses of vitamin D fortified milk gives a woman the recommended 400 IU a day. Weight bearing exercise such as walking has been shown to reduce the risk of osteoporosis as has stopping smoking and cutting back on alcohol and caffeine.

There are certain categories of women, for example women with a personal or family history of osteoporosis who are postmenopausal and all women over the age of 65, who should be screened for osteoporosis through a bone density test, which can be performed at Lake Regional Health System. For more information, contact Bay Point Maternity to schedule an appointment with Dr. Schwartz to discuss osteoporosis and bone density testing. Taking care of your bones can help you live a long, active life!