

Holistic Health

With all of the alarming news recently about the dangerous side effects of anti-osteoporosis drugs like Premarin and Fosamax (see sidebar), many shoppers are turning to natural health pathways as a means of preserving healthy bones.

Indeed, a natural approach to preventing osteoporosis is one of the single most intelligent and health-oriented strategies women—and, yes, men too—can undertake.

Fortunately, the health benefits of a natural approach for preventing bone loss go well beyond your skeleton. By following our simple guide, you will also reduce your risk of colon cancer and heart disease, and enjoy improved sleep and even anti-aging effects.

YOUR GUIDE TO Maintaining Healthy Bones

a simplified natural approach to preventing bone loss includes three major areas of concern: diet, supplementation, and exercise.

Adequate calcium intake is critical to preventing bone loss. The National Academy of Sciences and the National Osteoporosis Foundation recommend daily calcium intakes of 1,000 to 1,200 milligrams per day for adult men and women.

Although food is the best source of calcium (see next page), most Americans do not receive enough calcium in their diets, according to both groups. If you are unable to get enough calcium through your diet, they both recommend calcium supplements. However, since there are several different types of calcium and a variety of supplements available, you should know how to choose the best kind.

One common myth about calcium supplements is that the body requires only calcium for strong, healthy bones. As early as 1993, researchers from the University of California at San Diego reported that not only is calcium status critical to bone health but so is intake of vitamin D, magnesium, copper, manganese, and zinc (as well as traces of naturally occurring fluoride). According to their research, published in the *Journal of the American College of Nutrition*, several clinical studies have “demonstrated the necessity of trace elements for optimal bone matrix

development and bone density sustenance.”

Some experts now believe that the best source of calcium is a whole food source. “Most of us have heard about the major minerals such as calcium, magnesium, manganese, potassium, phosphorus, zinc, and so on,” notes Dr. James Chappell, a clinical nutritionist, herbalist, chiropractic and naturopathic doctor. “However, there are dozens of other minerals known as trace minerals and even more *unknown use* minerals. These minerals all have one thing in common: they are synergistically and antagonistically related.”

Simply put, they have a profound influence over each other. An example would be calcium. “If you just take a calcium supplement, regardless of the form (carbonate, citrate, lactate, gluconate or phosphate), you risk creating a calcium overload or imbalance,” says Chappell. “This will eventually drive zinc down and out of the body. This not only compromises your immune system, but will cause copper to rise. Although copper is a very important mineral, if it rises above acceptable limits, it becomes toxic. Depression, mood swings, irritability and mental confusion can all be consequences of a copper overload or imbalance. Because women are told by their uninformed doctors to take isolated calcium to either prevent or treat osteoporosis, we now have thousands of unsuspecting women seeking additional treatment for the above symptoms. As indicated, these symptoms may very well be caused by taking isolated calcium.”



CORAL MINERALS— NATURE'S WHOLE FOOD CALCIUM SUPPLEMENT

Most bone health supplements today contain primarily calcium (often with vitamin D for improved absorption), but Dr. Chappell has found that patients do best when given a whole food calcium supplement that contains trace minerals. The best source for whole food calcium today, he says, is from coral minerals.

Osteoporosis Medication Side Effects

The most commonly used anti-osteoporosis drugs have side effects that you should know about. Here is a quick review of the most popular drugs and their side effects.

- **Hormone Replacement Therapy (e.g., Premarin)**—Prolonged use of estrogen or estrogen with progestin (synthetic progesterone) has been shown to increase risk of breast cancer, blood clots, and heart disease.
- **Biphosphonates (e.g., Fosamax, Boniva, Actonel)**—The side effects for alendronate, ibandronate and risedronate include not only gastrointestinal distress but, in rare instances, necrosis of the jaw.
- **Calcitonin (injectable)**—Side effects include nausea, increased urination and bowel movements.

"The key in effective nutritional supplementation is consuming concentrated whole foods," says Dr. Chappell. "In order not to cause an imbalance, whether by deficiency or overload, all known and unknown minerals must be taken simultaneously. They must be organic, bio-available, bio-efficient and ionic. In other words, your body must be able to absorb and utilize them. After over 32 years of research and clinical application, I can unequivocally state *fossilized stony coral minerals from above the sea* are absolutely the best whole food, organic, bio-available, bio-efficient and ionic mineral complex I have ever seen. I am not talking about marine coral harvested from our current polluted oceans. I am talking about fossilized stony coral, which has been out of the ocean for thousands if not millions of years and is virtually void of all ocean contamination."

Stony corals are sea animals, which include the hydroids, jellyfish and sea anemones. By secreting a highly mineralized organic limestone, the stony corals build a housing of protective cups into which the soft polyp animals can retreat when disturbed. The organic limestone housing is processed by the stony coral from all the metallic and organic minerals available in the ocean. "However, because our oceans are currently contaminated with toxic chemicals and metals, only above the sea *fossilized stony coral* is safe to consume," he adds.

In 1997 at the 44th annual meeting of the Japan Dietetics Society, results of a study conducted by researchers at the Tokyo University of Agriculture were presented that compared four kinds of calcium: natural coral, calcium carbonate, milk calcium, and cow-bone calcium. After four weeks, measurements of calcium concentrations in key organs and blood serum were taken. Natural coral calcium was 69.6 percent better absorbed than the other types, and, what's more, beneficial high-density lipoprotein levels were also highest. This means that coral minerals apparently have a unique and positive impact on HDLs, the good cholesterol, high levels of which are associated with reduced risk for heart disease.

At the 52nd annual meeting of the Japanese Society of Nutrition and Food Science in 1998, results of a clinical trial to measure changes in bone mineral density among 157 students (ages 19 to 28) were reported. Although exercise or calcium alone or a combination of the two improved

bone mineral density, the most profound improvements were found among those students receiving coral minerals and exercise (a combination of strength training and walking).

The beauty of coral minerals is that the body readily accepts them as its own, which is why coral is a favorite material for medical bone grafts since it is so readily absorbed into endogenous bone. Coral minerals are so rich in more than 70 trace minerals, besides having generous amounts of calcium, that they are gaining greater and greater popularity as a nutritional supplement for strong, healthy bones.

EXERCISE IS KEY TO HEALTHY BONES

The final key to healthy bones is exercise. The Japanese study supports many other studies that show our bones require us to use them in order to maintain healthy mineral density. Unfortunately, in our current sedentary society, most of us don't exercise enough; yet, a combination of strength training, walking, and other

daily physical activities can actually make the use of anti-osteoporosis drugs unnecessary. Most researchers agree that weight-bearing exercise is superior to walking. Be sure to start off light and work up to heavier weights. The key is consistency.

Only half an hour a day of weight-bearing exercise can help prevent bone mineral loss. You will find that a combination of coral minerals and exercise delivers excellent bone-building results. In addition, studies also show that exercise reduces risk of cancer and heart disease. ■

Resources

Above-sea, eco-safe coral minerals from Coral Inc. are considered to be the premiere whole food coral mineral source today. Coral Inc. coral minerals include optimal amounts of highly absorbable calcium together with more than 70 trace minerals that progressive health experts maintain are also necessary to bone health.

Since this product is obtained from above-sea fossilized stony minerals, no damage is ever done to active coral reefs. Coral Inc. whole food coral mineral formulas are available at health food stores and natural product supermarkets. To find a store in your area, call (800) 882-9577 or visit www.coralcalcium.com.

How to Increase Your Dietary Calcium Intake

One way to increase the amount of calcium in your diet is to eat calcium-rich foods like low-fat milk, cheese, broccoli and others, according to the National Osteoporosis Foundation.

Many foods are fortified with calcium and are readily available and affordable. Foods like orange juice, cereals and breakfast bars have calcium added to them.

Another easy and economical way to boost the calcium content of many meals is to add nonfat powdered dry milk to puddings, homemade cookies, breads or muffins, soups, gravy, casseroles, and even a glass of milk. A single tablespoon of nonfat powdered dry milk adds 52 mg of calcium, and two to four tablespoons can be added to most recipes.



DID YOU KNOW Onions Can Do More Than Flavor Your Meals?

Research from the University of Bern (Switzerland) demonstrates that adding only a small amount of onions to meals can help to prevent bone loss.

REFERENCES
Saltman, PD. & Strause, L.G. "The role of trace minerals in osteoporosis." *Journal of the American College of Nutrition*, 1993;12(4):384-9.

