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BONE HEALTH---TREATING AND PREVENTING OSTEOPOROSIS

With recent concerns about bisphosphonate medications (Fosamax/Actonel/Boniva), there is a greater emphasis on alternative approaches to bone building, using supplements for calcium and Vitamin D.

Calcium in the Diet:

Diet or diet and supplements would ideally yield 1500mg per day, although lower amounts are still acceptable.

Our first focus is on foods that naturally contain calcium in solid quantities. To get a list of calcium rich foods, please see [The Diets Minibook](#) by Doctor Doug & Debbie Landau-West.

Calcium Supplements:

There are many calcium supplements available, each with various claims of superiority. Calcium basically divides up into two categories: Calcium Carbonate and Calcium Citrate.

Calcium Citrate (Citrical brand) is the best and most easily absorbed of the calcium supplements and as such, is my preferred recommendation. If we are not going to focus on FDA approved medications as our mainstay of treatment, then using a properly manufactured calcium product.

Citrical 250mg...2 pills at a time, 2-3 times per day is the ideal calcium supplement.

Calcium Carbonate (OsCal, TUMS) is a solid form of calcium but may not absorb perfectly. That said, generic forms of calcium carbonate are known to be difficult to dissolve, and in fact many will not absorb at all, yielding an ineffective calcium supplement. Again, 500mg at a time, up to 1500mg daily is recommended.

Do be aware that calcium can cause digestive issues, either gasiness or constipation. Reduce the dose if this occurs.

Vitamin D:

Vitamin D is easily absorbed and the manufacturer is not as important as it is for the calcium supplement. There are only a few manufacturers of the various vitamins worldwide.

Dosing is 1000-5000 units daily, but no more. These are over-the-counter dosages. There are few side effects from Vitamin D and it will help the body absorb calcium to its maximum

Dosing of 50,000 units weekly (prescription) is another option and should be considered only in patients with documented low Vitamin D levels.

Exercise:

In addition to supplements, exercise is a key ingredient in keeping bones healthy.

Exercising is the first key, as noted in THE KEYS Minibuk that is first in our series, so doing exercise that stresses the bones (weight bearing exercise such as running, bicycling, cross-training, ball sports) are effective exercise that will build bone.

Bisphosphonate Medications (Fosamax/Actonel/Boniva/Reclast (IV)):

These medications have come under fire, primarily for the concerns of negative effects after prolonged use (over 10 years). It appears that after that period of

time, the benefits of the medication wane and there are negatives that develop (decreased bone strength resulting in spontaneous fractures.)

This said, using the medication for less than 5 years, or from 5-10 years appears to be safe and helpful. Remember, initial research has shown a 50% reduction in bone fracture from these medications and the concerns about the negatives do not eliminate these benefits, that are proven in multiple scientific studies.