Osteoporosis and Weight

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The Link Between Weight and Osteoporosis

Do you want to prevent or better manage your osteoporosis? Keeping an eye on your weight is one good step to keep your bones healthy. If you are underweight, you are more likely to suffer from osteoporosis. If you are overweight, there is more pressure on your bones and you're more likely to suffer an injury, followed by a fracture. The goal is to have optimal weight.

Being thin – with a body mass index (BMI) less than 18.5 – has a negative impact on bone density. Perhaps a better predictor for bone loss is a weight lower than 127 pounds, according to research studies. These results may make one may wonder if having a few extra pounds would be protective against osteoporosis. However, a 2013 study featured in the journal "Osteoporosis International" found that both situations – being overweight/obese and being underweight – increase the chance of fractures in postmenopausal women.

Crash Diets Further Promote Bone Loss

If you have extra pounds to lose, avoid any type of restrictive diet, because fast weight loss goes hand in hand with bone loss. This happens especially if you cut down significantly your calorie intake (i.e. consuming 800-900 calories daily for several weeks) and you don't get enough calcium and other minerals that are essential for your bone health in your diet.

Tips for Losing Weight Safely and Efficiently

1. Aim for a balanced diet, with about 1,200 calories daily for women (1,400 for men), including 1000 grams of calcium (if you are younger than 50) or 1,200 grams (if you are over 50). Of all the weight loss diets, Weight Watchers can be helpful, as it recommends three dairy servings a day, and calcium supplements. Make sure you include in your diet plenty of fresh vegetables and some fruits (dark green leafy vegetables and calcium fortified juices are good sources of calcium), dairy products (such as low fat yogurt, goat cheese), lean meats and fish, healthy oils, nuts and seeds. Since diet does not provide enough amounts of vitamin D, you should take it in supplement form.

2. Vitamin D works closely with calcium and other minerals to prevent bone loss, but can also help you extra weight. The daily dosage should be recommended based on the blood levels of vitamin D.
3. Exercise helps you better manage your weight, and keep your bones healthy, too. The best exercises to prevent or manage osteoporosis are: weight bearing (i.e. walking, hiking, dancing), resistance (with weights or resistance bands/tubes), and flexibility (i.e. stretching, tai chi, yoga).

If You Need to Gain Weight

Check with your doctor to see if there are underlying causes of your weight issues (i.e. not being able to absorb the nutrients from food), and correct those first. Next, you should see a dietician for a weight gain plan. The goal

is to not gain more than 1-2 pounds a week. Continue to snack and have heavier main meals. You should also use the same three types of exercise as listed above for weight loss, with a focus on resistance (weight) training, as they help you to achieve optimal weight.