

MYTHS OR FACTS ABOUT OSTEOPOROSIS

➤ ***Men do not get osteoporosis.***

Myth

Men can and do get osteoporosis. Twenty percent of those with the disease are men. However, men are at less risk because they eat more (and therefore get more calcium), have greater peak bone density, and generally do not experience the equivalent of menopause.

➤ ***Diet can provide all of the calcium a body needs.***

Fact

Healthy individuals who eat a balanced diet can obtain adequate calcium. During this session, participants will learn more about calcium-rich foods.

➤ ***If your grandmother had osteoporosis, you will get it also.*** **Myth**

All women run the risk of osteoporosis. Heredity is only one of many risk factors. However, having one or more risk factors does not mean that a person will develop osteoporosis. We can do many things to promote bone strength.

➤ ***Dairy products are the only source of calcium.***

Myth

Although milk, yogurt and cheese are the richest sources of calcium, this presentation will provide information about other foods that also provide calcium, such as tofu, beans, and dark leafy greens. Calcium tablets are an additional source of calcium for individuals that cannot or will not full fill their calcium requirements with their diets.

➤ ***If you have osteoporosis, you can do nothing about it.*** **Myth**

Individuals diagnosed with osteoporosis should adopt safety precautions to help avoid falls. Healthful eating habits and exercise can minimize bone loss for those diagnosed with osteoporosis. A physician may also prescribe medications. All therapies for osteoporosis should be supervised by a physician.

➤ ***Bones stop growing when we reach full height (about age 20)*** **Myth**

Bones continue to increase in mass and density through young adulthood (between ages 20 and 30).

- ***Susceptibility to fractures can indicate osteoporosis.*** **Fact**

Osteoporosis is often called the “silent disease” because it is not apparent in its early stages. Normal x-rays do not show bone loss until 30% of the bone has been lost. Sometimes a fracture is the first indication of thinning bones.

- ***Low calcium intake during adolescence can cause osteoporosis later.*** **Fact**

Much bone growth takes place during adolescence, so the need for calcium is great. Bones that do not get enough calcium during this period are more susceptible to fractures that can occur in later years.

- ***Exercise is dangerous for older people.*** **Myth**

Exercise not only minimizes bone loss but may also prevent the risk of fracture. Exercise improves posture and increases muscle development and balance. Everyone should consult a physician or health care professional before beginning any exercise program.