



## **Men Become Fragile With Age, Minerals Can Help?**

Osteoporosis has always been known to threaten women, as it afflicts 8 million females in the US, but this bone-thinning disorder is becoming a serious public health issue among men also. More than 2 million men may be at risk for osteoporosis and bone fractures, with 6% of them over age 50 will experience a hip fracture as a result of this disease. Even though osteoporosis does not affect men as often as it does women, the risk for men increases with age, with the risk factors being similar to those of women. Osteoporosis often shows no symptom until a bone fracture occurs, which makes early detection extremely important.

With new bone material constantly replacing the old, more bone is produced than removed during childhood, which lets the skeleton grow. Bone mass peaks for most people during their 30s, with the processing reversing itself afterwards. The amount of bone slowly begins to decline as the removal of old exceeds the formation of new. Because female hormone production drops rapidly at menopause, this condition is immediately associated with increased bone loss. Hormonal changes in men occur much more slowly, with testosterone levels declining about 1% each year after the age of 40, remaining unnoticeable until after age 60.

Women lose bone more rapidly than men up until after age 65, when the rates equal out. The absorption of calcium decreases in both sexes, while excessive bone loss increases the fragility of bones, leading to fractures in the hip, spine, and wrist. Women begin to get spine fractures in their late 50s, while men take about 10 years longer for this to begin, which can partially be attributed to their larger skeletons, which takes longer for osteoporosis to develop.

Along with being brought on by advancing age and lower testosterone levels, osteoporosis can develop due to small stature, smoking, excessive alcohol intake, gastric cancer, HIV infection, celiac disease, various medications, and growth hormone deficiency. Because nothing can be done about one's stature, some basic lifestyle adjustments, such as not smoking, limiting alcohol consumption to no more than two drinks each day, and increasing exercise, can help a man protect his bones. A man should also look for treatment for any other underlying medical conditions that affect bone health.

Calcium, one of the best known nutrients associated with healthy bones, needs help to provide maximum protection. Therefore, other skeleton-strengthening minerals necessary are magnesium, which regulates calcium transport within the body; zinc, which is required for collagen; and boron, which is a trace element that helps the body to use



calcium, magnesium, and other minerals. Boron is also important because it activates vitamin D.

Finally, vitamin D is another key bone nutrient. In order to ensure adequate D intake, at least 10 minutes of sunlight a day or dietary supplements is important. In colder, cloudier times, vitamin D supplementation is highly recommended. Additionally, B vitamin deficiencies have often been associated with an increased chance of developing osteoporosis. The best way for a man to avoid osteoporosis is to be aware of his risk. The knowledge of osteoporosis in women has led to a downward trend in women breaking hips, but the incidence is still going up for men.