What is Osteoporosis?

Excerpt from the National Osteoporosis Foundation,

WHF observes May 2013 as Osteoporosis Awareness and Prevention Month

**What is Osteoporosis?**

Osteoporosis is a disease of the bones. It happens when you lose too much bone, make too little bone or both. As a result, bones become weak and can break from a minor fall or, in serious cases, even from simple actions, like sneezing or bumping into furniture.

Osteoporosis means “porous bone.” If you look at healthy bone under a microscope, you will see that parts of it look like a honeycomb. If you have osteoporosis, the holes and spaces in the honeycomb are much bigger than they are in healthy bone. This means your bones have lost density or mass and that the structure of your bone tissue has become abnormal. As your bones become less dense, they also become weaker and more likely to break. If you’re age 50 or older and have broken a bone, talk to your doctor or other healthcare provider and ask if you should have a bone density test.

**Osteoporosis Is Common**

About 10 million Americans have osteoporosis. About 34 million are at risk for the disease. Estimates suggest that about half of all women older than 50, and up to one in four men, will break a bone because of osteoporosis.

**Osteoporosis Is Serious**

Breaking a bone is a serious complication of osteoporosis, especially when you’re older. Broken bones due to osteoporosis are most likely to occur in the hip, spine and wrist, but other bones can break too. Broken bones can cause severe pain that may not go away. With osteoporosis some people lose height and become shorter. It can also affect your posture, causing you to become stooped or hunched. This happens when the bones of the spine, called vertebrae, begin to break or collapse.
Osteoporosis may even keep you from getting around easily and doing the things you enjoy. This can make you feel isolated and depressed. It can also lead to other health problems. Twenty percent of seniors who break a hip die within one year from problems related to the broken bone itself or surgery to repair it. Many of those who survive need long-term nursing home care.

**Osteoporosis Is Costly**
Osteoporosis is responsible for two million broken bones and $19 billion in related costs every year. By 2025, experts predict that osteoporosis will be responsible for approximately three million fractures and $25.3 billion in costs each year.

**Osteoporosis Can Sneak up on You**
Osteoporosis is often called the “silent disease,” because you could have it now or be at-risk without even realizing it. You can’t feel your bones becoming weaker. Breaking a bone is often the first clue that you have osteoporosis or you may notice that you are getting shorter or your upper back is curving forward. If you are experiencing height loss or your spine is curving, talk to a doctor or healthcare professional right away as the disease may be advanced.

**Eating for Strong Bones**

**Alcohol and Caffeine**

**Alcohol.** Drinking heavily can lead to bone loss. Limit alcohol to no more than 2 - 3 drinks per day.

**Caffeine.** Coffee, tea and soft drinks (sodas) contain caffeine, which may decrease calcium absorption and contribute to bone loss. Choose these drinks in moderation.

**Coffee/tea.** Drinking more than three cups of coffee every day may interfere with calcium absorption and cause bone loss.

**Soft drinks.** Some studies suggest that colas, but not other soft drinks, are associated with bone loss. While more research will help us to better understand the link between soft drinks and bone health, here is what we know: The carbonation in soft drinks does not cause any harm to bone. The caffeine and phosphorous commonly found in colas may contribute to bone loss. Like calcium, phosphorous is a part of the bones. It is listed as an ingredient in colas, some other soft drinks and processed foods as “phosphate” or “phosphoric acid.”.

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**~ Tammy's Corner ~**

by Tammy Till

Start warming up those winter muscles with the warmer weather.

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Go out and enjoy Wyoming's great outdoors this Spring!

Wyoming On Wellness
Some experts say that Americans get too much phosphorous, while others believe that it is not a problem as long as people get enough calcium. The harm to bone may actually be caused when people choose soft drinks over milk and calcium-fortified beverages. Luckily you can help make up for any calcium lost from these beverages by getting enough calcium to meet your body’s needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Nutrient</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dairy products such as low-fat and non-fat milk, yogurt and cheese</td>
<td>Calcium. Some dairy products are fortified with Vitamin D.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Canned sardines and salmon (with bones)</td>
<td>Calcium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatty varieties such as salmon, mackerel, tuna and sardines</td>
<td>Vitamin D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fruits and vegetables</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Collard greens, turnip greens, kale, okra, Chinese cabbage, dandelion greens, mustard greens and broccoli.</td>
<td>Calcium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spinach, beet greens, okra, tomato products, artichokes, plantains, potatoes, sweet potatoes, collard greens and raisins.</td>
<td>Magnesium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tomato products, raisins, potatoes, spinach, sweet potatoes, papaya, oranges, orange juice, bananas, plantains and prunes.</td>
<td>Potassium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Red peppers, green peppers, oranges, grapefruits, broccoli, strawberries, brussels sprouts, papaya and pineapples.</td>
<td>Vitamin C</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dark green leafy vegetables such as kale, collard greens, spinach, mustard greens, turnip greens and brussel sprouts.</td>
<td>Vitamin K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fortified Foods</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Calcium and vitamin D are sometimes added to certain brands of juices, breakfast foods, soy milk, rice milk, cereals, snacks and breads.</td>
<td>Calcium, Vitamin D</td>
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</tbody>
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What are your Vitamin D and Bone Density levels telling you?
For State of Wyoming Health Plan Participants, the Bone Density screening is FREE! The Vitamin D screening is only $35.

Visit WHF today!
Not just any old workout boasts bone benefits. The best exercise for building bone density and strength follows the **LIVE** approach:

**L** is for *Load-bearing*. Weight-bearing exercise that requires your muscles to work against gravity by moving your own weight (or added weight) up and down has the most bone-building benefits. Examples are jogging, stair climbing, dancing, tennis, walking and step aerobics.

**I** is for *Intensity*. The more weight you move, and the more vigorously you move it, the more that exercise will strengthen your bones. The best approach is to use a weight heavy enough that you can only do 7 - 8 repetitions in good form. When you can handle 12 repetitions with that weight, it’s time to increase.

**V** is for *Variety*. Exercises that involve as many different muscles in many different functional movement patterns are best. You don’t have to do this in every exercise session, but you should rotate to a new set of exercises every couple of weeks.

**E** is for *Enjoyable*. Let’s face it. If you don’t like your exercises, you’re not likely to do them as much as you need to for best results. Gardening is one good example. Another is making a point of getting up out of your chair without using your hands or arms for assistance.

Kale is delicious served with pork chops, added to potato dishes, or tucked into a roast beef sandwich. In California, kale is grown all year. Surprisingly, we’ve found that kids particularly like the strong flavor of kale.

**INGREDIENTS**

2 pounds kale  
Extra virgin olive oil  
Salt  
4 or 5 garlic cloves, finely chopped  
Red pepper flakes  
Red wine vinegar  
Pepper  
Yield: Serves 4 to 6

**DIRECTIONS**

Remove the stems from the kale and chop the leaves coarsely. Wash and drain well, but do not dry. Heat a large sauté pan, add ¼ cup olive oil and enough kale to cover the bottom of the pan, and cook over high heat while stirring to rotate the leaves. Add more kale as the leaves wilt. When all of the kale has been added, season with salt, cover, and reduce the heat to medium. Cook, stirring occasionally; the cooking time will depend on the maturity of the kale. Young kale will be tender after 4 or 5 minutes. It may be necessary to add a splash of water if the leaves begin to scorch. When the leaves are tender, remove the lid and allow any excess water to cook away. Push the kale to one side of the pan and add an extra drizzle of olive oil, the garlic, and a pinch of red pepper flakes to the bare spot. Just as you smell the aroma of the garlic, stir to combine it with the kale. Turn off the heat, add a splash of vinegar, and correct the seasoning with salt and pepper as necessary. Serve warm or room temperature.

**Excerpt from Sparkpeople.com**