

GET FIT & GET HEALTHY

It's never too late to keep your bones healthy for life

November is Osteoporosis Month and quite honestly 15 years ago I didn't know much about it. I thought it was an inevitable part of aging affecting only elderly women and that I didn't need to be concerned about it at my age.

I have since learned osteoporosis has been called a pediatric disease with geriatric consequences. For healthy bones in our senior years we need to achieve peak bone mass when we are young, and maintain it as we age through physical activity and a nutrient-rich diet.

Osteoporosis (pronounced Oss-tee-o-puh-RO-sis) literally means "porous bones". It is a disease that makes bones thin and weak and at risk of breaking, particularly the bones of the hip, spine and wrist. Even lifting or twisting can create enough disc compression to cause fractures of the small bones in the spine.

Almost two million Canadians are living with osteoporosis;

1 in 4 women and at least 1 in 8 men over 50. Osteoporosis is often called the "silent" disease because bone loss occurs without symptoms over time and people don't know they have it until a bone breaks from a minor fall that wouldn't normally cause a fracture.

Peak bone mass is achieved at age 16 in girls and age 20 in young men. Women and men alike begin to lose bone mass in their mid-thirties. For women the rate of bone mass loss increases after menopause.

The bone mass built up during our youth is intended to last us through our lifetime. Your children are in their key bone building years but 88% of Canadian children and youth are not meeting Canada's physical activity guidelines— yet another reason to reduce screen time and get our children moving. Daily physical activity will improve a



child's skeletal health and reduce their risk of developing osteoporosis in the future. During physical activity we use our muscles which pull against our bones, stimulating formation of new bone and remodeling the bone to be stronger.

It's never too late to make the changes necessary to keep your bones healthy for life. Weight bearing exercises like walking, jogging, hiking, dancing, jumping, stair climbing and/or a progressive resistance training program will help build healthy bones in our youth and maintain bone density as we age. Exercise can also improve strength, flexibility, posture, balance and co-ordination which can reduce risk of falling and enhance activities of daily living.

Osteoporosis can strike at any age. Research has not identi-

fied one single cause for osteoporosis, both heredity and lifestyle factors can play a role. Lifestyle factors are within your control. Exercise often and enjoy a nutrient-rich diet. Limit salt, caffeine, soft drinks, alcohol, screen time and don't smoke.

Take a 60-second risk factor quiz or learn more about osteoporosis from Osteoporosis Canada www.osteoporosis.ca or contact by phone 1-800-463-6842.

If you haven't exercised regularly for a while, check with your healthcare provider before beginning a new exercise program. If you have been diagnosed with osteoporosis, you should work with a qualified health practitioner to develop a safe exercise program.

Get your daily dose of activity.

Submitted by Cydney Schumacker, Personal Trainer, www.iminspired.ca

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