

# HEALTH News & Notes

## Fight Osteoporosis—Calcium Stealers That Lead To Poor Bone Health

(NAPSA)—According to a recent Surgeon General's report, one in two Americans will be affected with osteoporosis by 2020. Osteoporosis, a bone density disease, is a major public health threat that can lead to increased susceptibility to bone fractures. Today, osteoporosis affects an estimated 44 million Americans, both men and women alike.

Calcium is a mineral that plays a crucial role in preventing osteoporosis by helping to strengthen the bones. Unfortunately, many adults consume only half of the recommended daily intake of 1,000 to 1,200 mg of calcium, according to the National Osteoporosis Foundation.

Furthermore, many Americans don't realize that certain activities or conditions can deplete the body's calcium levels. Heidi Becker, M.S., R.D., Consumer Education Specialist with Nature Made, identifies the following "secret stealers" of calcium:

- **Excessive lifestyles**—Studies have shown that smoking accelerates bone loss and contributes to less efficient calcium absorption. In addition, drinking alcohol on a regular basis can break down bone mass in both men and women. Extremely high protein intake or excessive consumption of caffeine or soda may also hinder calcium absorption.

- **Various medications**—A number of prescription medications interfere with calcium absorption, including diuretics,



**Your lifestyle choices could be robbing your bones of calcium.**

corticosteroids, anti-convulsants, immunosuppressive medications, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, asthma medications with steroids and many antibiotics. Ask your physician or pharmacist if the medication you're taking will interfere with calcium absorption and what you should do about it.

- **Salt**—A high-sodium diet increases the loss of calcium and other minerals through the kidneys into the urine. Every two extra grams of dietary sodium decreases the amount of calcium absorbed by 30 to 40 mg.

- **The sedentary lifestyle**—Individuals who get little or no exercise—especially weight-bearing exercise, such as walking and weight lifting—and have inadequate calcium intake are at risk for calcium depletion from the bones.

- **Low levels of vitamin D**—

A 2001 study from Harvard Medical School found that up to 40 percent of people in the United States may be vitamin D deficient. Vitamin D is necessary for the intestinal absorption of calcium.

"A balanced diet rich in calcium, vitamin D and other nutrients, proper exercise and a healthy lifestyle are all ways to keep bones healthy," says Becker. "Nature Made, the makers of a variety of calcium supplements, has made a commitment to 'Stop Osteoporosis Now' by making sure consumers are educated about calcium sources and the importance of calcium in the diet." Becker offers these easy tips for meeting the daily recommended value of calcium:

- Calcium is absorbed best when consumed in small doses. Never consume more than 600 mg in one sitting.

- Low-fat dairy products such as skim milk, yogurt, cheese and ice cream, as well as dark green, leafy vegetables, are the best food sources of calcium.

- Try calcium supplements. Nature Made has introduced a new Calcium Minis. By using patent-pending technology, the calcium tablets are up to 30 percent smaller than standard calcium tablets. In addition, Nature Made also has a new chewable calcium available in two flavors, chocolate and assorted fruit.

To learn more, call 1-800-276-2878 or visit [www.NatureMade.com](http://www.NatureMade.com).