

If You Take Prescription Osteoporosis Medication, Don't Forget Your Calcium

(NAPSA)—An estimated 44 million men and women—nearly 55 percent of Americans 50 and older—are at risk of osteoporosis or low bone mass. About 10 million people already have this “silent” brittle bones disease, with women making up to 80 percent of that total.

For many, prescription medications may be considered the osteoporosis cure-all. Clinical studies have shown calcium and vitamin D are critical in order to get the full benefit of these medications. Unfortunately, a recent national physician audit found that three out of four women taking prescriptions for osteoporosis are not receiving recommendations for calcium and vitamin D supplementation as part of their daily health regimens.

The “Physician Drug & Diagnosis Audit” revealed that physicians made more than 5.8 million recommendations for the osteoporosis medications Fosamax, Evista, Miacalcin and Actonel, yet only 25 percent included recommendations for calcium supplementation. Meanwhile, the latest NIH Consensus Panel determined that treatment of osteoporosis with any prescription drug therapy requires sufficient calcium and vitamin D to achieve optimal benefits.

“Unfortunately, many women may stop their lifestyle and nutritional approaches once they are prescribed a medication,” notes John Bilezikian, M.D., professor of medicine, College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University. “Healthcare professionals, including doctors, nurses and pharmacists, should talk to their patients about the importance of taking calcium supplements with their Rx medications.”



Calcium is an important part of a woman's daily health regimen.

Since women can start to lose bone mass as early as their 20s or 30s, it's never too early to begin an individual exercise program. The benefit of weight-bearing activities and calcium can help build and maintain strong bones for life. The National Osteoporosis Foundation notes that calcium is an important part of an overall prevention or treatment regimen for osteoporosis. A well-balanced diet and exercise are also critical to the prevention and treatment of osteoporosis.

“Calcium is a vital part of the osteoporosis treatment regimen,” says Bilezikian. “I recommend taking a calcium supplement like Citracal® to ensure they meet their daily calcium requirements. It's well-absorbed by the body and can be taken with or without meals.”

For more information on osteoporosis and the benefits of calcium supplementation, or to use the Calcium Counter, an interactive quiz to determine if you are getting enough calcium, visit www.citracal.com.