

Women's Health Update

Bone Up On Vitamin D

(NAPSA)—Weak, fragile bones and susceptibility to fractures—these are some of the painful consequences of the debilitating bone disease, osteoporosis. Currently, 10 million people suffer from osteoporosis in the United States and another 34 million are at risk of developing the disease. The Surgeon General has named osteoporosis a national health threat and estimated that by 2020 one in two Americans over the age of 50 will be at risk for fractures from osteoporosis or low bone mass.

There are several risk factors associated with the development of osteoporosis, including inadequate levels of vitamin D, a nutrient essential to the body's absorption of calcium. Recent research has uncovered that over 70 percent of women over the age of 50 have low levels of vitamin D, and even women being treated for osteoporosis have low levels of the important vitamin. To address the need for greater awareness about low levels of vitamin D, Spirit of Women Hospital Network has teamed up with Dr. Marie Savard, an internationally recognized women's health expert, to launch a new vitamin D risk assessment.

To take the vitamin D risk assessment or to download a patient-friendly vitamin D brochure, please visit www.whatwomenputupwith.com.

"Patients are frequently unaware of the importance of vitamin D in bone health and may not know they have low levels of vitamin D. Given its effect on calcium absorption, vitamin D inadequacy is an important medical concern

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for women, especially those over 50 or those who have been diagnosed with osteoporosis," said Dr. Savard.

In 2005, The American Medical Women's Association issued recommendations that called for an increase in vitamin D to 800-1,000 IU daily. The risk assessment will enable women to actively address the adequacy of their vitamin D intake and will direct them toward a possible treatment option for osteoporosis to discuss with their doctors.

"Women today want to be on top of their health to ensure their mobility and independence for a lifetime. The vitamin D risk assessment will help women recognize risk factors for osteoporosis and empower them to make important decisions about their bone health," said Tanya Abreu, national director of Spirit of Women Hospital Network. "By spreading the word about the importance of vitamin D, we hope that women would recognize one of the risk factors for osteoporosis and take ACTION to prevent osteoporosis by talking to their doctors."

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