

Strong Women Stay Young

by Miriam Nelson, PhD

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(NAPSA)—As a woman and as a scientist, I am frequently asked questions regarding the risks associated with hormone replacement therapy (HRT) and alternative ways to get the benefits without the risks. Following are



answers to some of the most common questions women are asking today about what they can do to avoid osteoporosis without taking medication.

My doctor said HRT therapy is necessary to maintain bone health. Are there other options?

For many women, taking HRT was one way that they could help protect themselves from osteoporosis, a serious but preventable disease that increases a woman's risk for bone fracture. Approximately 25 million American women have osteoporosis and, sadly, one out of two women is at risk of developing osteoporosis during her lifetime.

However, for years before HRT, women lived through menopause just fine and maintained bone health through smart lifestyle choices. By following a healthy diet and remaining active, many

women can continue to prevent bone loss in ways that suit their own lifestyles and schedules.

I'm not on HRT but I have a busy schedule. What are some natural ways for me to build bone mass?

Exercise and calcium are important in building bone density, but that doesn't have to mean running a marathon or eating several plates of broccoli. Remaining physically active could be as simple as taking the stairs or lifting groceries. Activities that get us up and going every day are excellent for the body and the mind and have health benefits that reach beyond our bones, into our muscles and heart.

In terms of diet, focusing on calcium rich foods such as low fat milk and yogurt is critical for bone health. You should be getting at least three servings of dairy foods per day. But, the reality is that many people don't have time in their schedules to prepare a balanced meal, and suspect, correctly, that they are short-changing themselves on calcium. A calcium supplement is an easy, but often overlooked, choice for those who can't tolerate dairy, are counting calories too closely to eat all they need, or just want to make sure that they are getting the optimal amount of calcium. Supplements containing calcium citrate, such as Citracal®, have the advantage of being highly sol-

uble and can be taken at anytime, with or without meals, which is a real convenience for women on the go.

Calcium matters to men, too, but women are more likely to consume less calcium in their diets.

Are there studies to support the claim that exercise and calcium help maintain bone?

There are several. A well-known study funded by the National Institutes of Health, executed by researchers at the University of Arizona, found that weight-bearing and resistance exercises combined with taking calcium citrate over one year provided significant improvement in bone mineral density (BMD) of postmenopausal women. Notably, this benefit was found both in women not on HRT and in women who were taking some form of HRT.

It is crucial that women educate themselves and know their options when it comes to their health. There are ways to get through menopause naturally without risking fractured bones. Remaining active and getting enough calcium are good ways to start!

For more expert advice on alternatives to HRT to help prevent osteoporosis, women should talk to their doctors. For more information on the benefits of calcium and easy tips to help prevent bone loss, please visit www.CalciumIQ.com.

Mission Pharmacal, the makers of Citracal®, is a family-owned pharmaceutical company based in San Antonio, TX.