

Osteopenia Follow Up

Osteopenia means that you have low bone density (thin bones) but not low enough to be diagnosed with osteoporosis. Having osteopenia means there is a greater chance that you will develop osteoporosis in the future. The thinner your bones, the more likely they are to break.

How can I keep osteopenia from progressing to osteoporosis?

Dietary Measures

Calcium: Make sure you get about 1200 mg of calcium a day from dietary sources or supplements or a combination of sources.

Dietary Calcium Sources

- Milk and other dairy products. Note that 8 oz of 1% milk has 350 mg of calcium
- Green vegetables (broccoli, bok choy)
- Calcium enriched products (cereals and some orange juice)
- Beans, canned fish with bones (sardines, salmon)

Calcium Supplements (1000 mg, best if divided into two doses of 500 mg twice a day)

- Two widely available calcium supplements are “**calcium carbonate**” and “**calcium citrate**.” To determine the calcium content, look at the “elemental calcium” content on the label, not just the number of milligrams of the active ingredient. Chewable calcium tablets may be more readily absorbed. You cannot absorb more than 500 mg of a calcium supplement at one time.

Vitamin D: Most adults need about 800 units (IU) a day through diet or supplements. Vitamin D is important in bone health at all ages. While your body does make Vitamin D from sun exposure (without sunscreen), in northern California, the sun is generally not strong to give adequate Vitamin D. Vitamin D is included in most calcium supplements but be sure to read the label.

Dietary Vitamin D Sources

- Fatty fish (salmon)
- Vitamin D fortified beverages (milk, orange juice)
- Eggs

Exercise: Include weight-bearing exercise in your daily routine. Examples of weight-bearing exercise include walking, climbing stairs, jogging, dancing and weight lifting. Swimming and bicycling are excellent for heart health but are not weight-bearing exercise.

Other Considerations

- Don't smoke
- Limit alcohol to 1 drink a day

Please talk with your doctor about follow up options and questions you may have. For more information, you can go to:

- Sutter Health: <http://www.sutterhealth.org/health/healthinfo/>
- National Osteoporosis Foundation: www.nof.org