



## PREVENTING OSTEOPOROSIS

Cancer treatment can affect your bone health. Menopause and hormonal changes may increase the risk for losing bone tissue for some women.

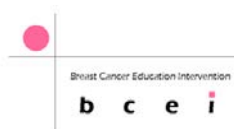
Menopause (the change of life) is the body's natural response to lower amounts of female hormones. A greater risk for osteoporosis (also called bone loss) comes with menopause. Chemotherapy can cause bone loss to start early. If you have concerns about bone loss after the change, here is some information to help.

Estrogen, a female hormone, helps some breast cancers to grow. Because of that, Hormone Replacement Therapy (sometimes referred to as HRT) is NOT often recommended for those who have had breast cancer. Be sure all your doctors are aware you have had breast cancer. Talk to your doctors before taking any medicines, herbal or dietary supplements to help prevent bone loss. You may have heard of products that are called safe substitutes for hormone replacement. Some act in the body like estrogen and their safety in those who have had breast cancer has not been proven.

Women who have gone through the change of life due to treatment and women taking drugs such as aromatase inhibitors like Arimidex should have their bone health checked. This can be done by having a bone mineral density test (scan).

**There are many known risk factors for osteoporosis.** You should know if you have any of them. Some of them are:

- Being female. Women have about twice the risk that men do.
- Age. The older you get, the higher the risk.
- Race. If you are white or of Southeast Asian descent, your risk is greater.
- Lifetime exposure to estrogen. The more exposure to estrogen, the lower the risk is.
- Family history.
- Frame size. Those who are very thin or have a small frame have a higher risk.



Copyright © 2016 BCEI

Used with the permission of the Young Breast Cancer Survivorship Network

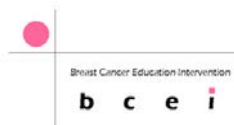


## PREVENTING OSTEOPOROSIS

- Tobacco use.
- Sedentary lifestyle.
- Excess caffeine intake.
- Chronic alcoholism.
- Taking certain medicines.
- Low calcium intake. Lifelong calcium has an effect on bone density.

### What you can do to help keep your bones healthy:

- **Eat a well-rounded diet.**
- **Make sure you are getting enough calcium.** Some calcium rich foods are dairy products, broccoli and dark green leafy vegetables. Many juices and cereals also have calcium added to them. The amount of calcium considered adequate is 1000-1200 mg per day. This will vary depending on your age. The body can absorb only about 500mgm. of a calcium supplement at any one time, so you should split your dose into 2 or 3 servings a day. The best way to take it is with a meal, the calcium is absorbed better that way.
- **Make sure that you are getting enough Vitamin D.** The best source is sun exposure. A general rule is to expose your hands and arms to the sun for about 15 minutes on warm days. There are some dietary sources. The best are milk products that have added Vitamin D and oily fish. You should get 200-400 IU (5-10 micrograms) of Vitamin D a day.
- **Avoid caffeine products.** (coffee, colas and chocolate...)
- **Exercise.** Weight bearing exercise like walking, jogging and aerobics, prevents bone loss.
- **Discuss taking a Calcium/ Vitamin D supplement with your doctor.** They can help you decide how much and what kind of calcium you should take.
- **If you smoke, stop.**
- **Drink alcohol only in moderation.**



Copyright © 2016 BCEI

Used with the permission of the Young Breast Cancer Survivorship Network



## PREVENTING OSTEOPOROSIS

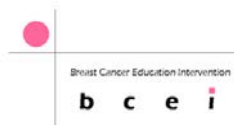
- **Talk to your doctor** about how to prevent bone loss. There are other medicines besides HRT that prevent bone loss and may be safe for you to take.

### When do you need to seek help?

Talk to your doctors or nurses about your concerns. Be sure to tell them if you have a family history of osteoporosis or other risk factors. They can give you more advice and facts about how to prevent this disease after the change of life.

### Useful websites:

- <https://www.nof.org/prevention/>
- <http://www.uab.edu/shp/toneyourbones/>
- <http://www.webmd.com/osteoporosis/guide/osteoporosis-prevention>



Copyright © 2016 BCEI

Used with the permission of the Young Breast Cancer Survivorship Network