

## Osteoporosis: Disease Facts

- ◆ Osteoporosis affects 1 in 4 women and 1 in 8 men over 50 in Canada – 1.4 million Canadians.
- ◆ Osteoporosis occurs when bones lose minerals – especially calcium but also trace minerals.
- ◆ Bone demineralization causes bones to become porous and break easily.
- ◆ Bone loss is gradual, asymptomatic and undetectable by X-rays until 25-30% of bone mass has been lost.
- ◆ The first sign of osteoporosis is often a hip, spinal or wrist fracture. 70% of the 25,000 hip fractures in Canada each year are related to osteoporosis. Treatment costs \$1.3 billion annually.
- ◆ Half of hip-fracture patients never fully recover. 29% die. More women die following hip fractures than from breast and ovarian cancer combined.

## Risk Factors

- ◆ Are you female?
- ◆ Are you pre-, peri- or post-menopausal?
- ◆ Do you have a small build?
- ◆ Do you have Caucasian and/or Asian ancestry?
- ◆ Has anyone in your family had osteoporosis?
- ◆ Do you exercise vigorously less than three times weekly?
- ◆ Do you consume less than Canadian RDAs for calcium per day?
- ◆ Do you consume less than Canadian RDAs for vitamin D per day?

- ◆ Do you drink more than three cups of coffee, tea or cola daily?
- ◆ Do you consume two or more drinks of alcohol daily?
- ◆ Is your diet particularly high in protein, potassium or sodium?
- ◆ Do you regularly use tobacco products?
- ◆ Have you used thyroid medications, steroids or anti-convulsants for prolonged periods?

## Decreasing Risk

- ◆ Get plenty of weight-bearing exercise such as walking, running or weight lifting because exercise builds bone mass.
- ◆ Spend daily time outside (to increase vitamin D and improve calcium absorption).
- ◆ Avoid tobacco.
- ◆ Limit intake of caffeine-containing beverages, alcohol, sugar, protein, salt and potassium.
- ◆ Eat calcium-rich foods and soy products. If necessary, supplement your diet with calcium, vitamin D, trace minerals and soy isoflavones.

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