

OSTEOPOROSIS IN WOMEN

Vaidya Shuchi Mitra, M.D., Ph.D.

Women should consult an orthopedic specialist after 45 years of age to prevent Osteoporosis. They should get tested for calcium deficiency. If the calcium level is found to be low then they should take extra calcium. Calcium is very essential in order to keep the bones strong. The body needs 1500 to 1800 mg of calcium every day. From the birth till the age of 30 years, special care should be taken because in this age the resistance power of the body reduces

Osteoporosis is a disease in which the bones lose their density and bone marrow also reduces. The bone structure also develops some kind of deformity. The bones become fragile and break due to slight pressure or injury. This occurs mainly due to the calcium deficiency. It is more common in old aged people and especially women. But, occurrence of this disease in young age is also not rare.

The disease occurs without showing any symptoms and the bones become weak. This can be diagnosed when there are fractures due to slightest pressure or jerks or even opening doors and windows with slight pressure or even slipping on the floor or mat. As it occurs silently it is known as 'silent disease osteoporosis'. It is more common among ladies aged 50 years or above. Generally the women undergo menopause at this age. However, nowadays this occurs even in young women of 35 years or so.

Women are more prone to this disease when compared to men. The main reason being that after menopause estrogen content reduces in the body and the fluid content in the bones also reduces. The process of formation and degeneration of bones in our body is an ongoing process. In this process the bones gain proper density and strength. Growth hormone, thyroid hormones play a major role in maintaining the strength of the bones. The hips and knees fail to take the weight of the body. The cushiony cartilage in between the bones reduces and as a result there is friction in between the bones leading to roughness of the surface of the bones. The patient complains of severe pain and takes steroids for relief. Excessive use of steroids increases the risk of Osteoporosis and in some cases it could be chronic as well.

Why are women more prone to osteoporosis?

In our country the women aged 50 years and above suffer from this problem. One out of four women suffer from this problem. Around 50 percent of the women aged 45 years and approximately 90% of the women aged 75 years suffer from this disease. As mentioned in the beginning, this disease occurs more in women than in men. On an average, one out of eight men suffer from this problem. The onus lies on the structure of our society where the girls are given less nutritious food when compared to boys. In Indian families, girls are given less milk and nutrient food than boys. The women who get less calcium diet in their childhood suffer from this disease in their old age. As per the growing age the sex hormones reduce and calcium content also decreases. This is the reason that in our country, the cases of elbow fracture are also high among women.

Women should consult an orthopedic specialist after 45 years of age to prevent Osteoporosis. They should get tested for calcium deficiency. If the calcium level is found to be low then they should take extra calcium. Calcium is very essential in order to keep the bones strong. The body needs 1500 to 1800 mg of calcium every day. From the birth till the age of 30 years, special care should be taken because in this age the resistance

power of the body reduces. The hormones responsible for the growth of bones also reduce. The concept of women drinking milk is not prevalent in our society. Therefore, it is very necessary that girls should be given milk and milk products since childhood. Besides calcium, vitamins are also very essential in order to overcome this problem. Vitamins are helpful in building up calcium deposits. Deficiency of vitamin D is also responsible for degeneration of bones and sunrays are the best source of vitamin D. It is also good to include vitamin D rich food in our daily diet. Generally lactating mothers and pregnant women suffer from calcium deficiency. They require extra calcium due to their physical condition. The pregnant women require more calcium so that the infant growing inside the womb is able to get sufficient amount of calcium and is able to develop strong bones. However, excessive consumption of calcium is also harmful. Therefore, consult a doctor before taking calcium supplement. The patients experience lot of pain in case of fracture. Sometimes, it is not diagnosed immediately. In case of spinal fracture, the spinal cord starts bending and the person develops hunch back. In some cases, there is risk of paralysis also. Hormone replacement therapy can be helpful in preventing Osteoporosis or serious condition. Estrogen and prostogen hormones are given to the patient in this therapy. The hormone deficiency caused due to uterus surgery, menopause, or other reasons is substituted with this therapy. A woman requires 1000 mg calcium everyday before menopause. However, after menopause if the woman is taking estrogen hormones then she does not require extra calcium.

Which women are more prone to Osteoporosis?

- The women who do not practice Yog.
- Women who undergo menopause.
- History of osteoporosis in the family.
- Women who suffer from menopause at the age of 45 years itself or who undergo uterus operation have more chances of this disease.
- Those who take very little calcium during childhood or who take less 800 mg calcium in daily diet.
- Asthma and arthritis patients who take steroids.

- Women who are addicted to alcohol, cigarette, coffee etc.
- Short and thin women are also prone to this disease.

Reasons

- Deformity in metabolism. Generally, people complain of indigestion leading to loose motions and vomiting. Such women also suffer from Osteoporosis.
- Lack of physical exercise.
- Hormonal imbalance.
- Deficiency of protein, calcium, vitamin D in daily diet.
- Menopause is one of the main reasons among women. One out of every three women and one out of every five men in the world suffer from this disease.
- Swelling in the stomach leads to weakening of bones in thyroid and epilepsy patients.
- Change in life style also leads to degeneration of bones.
- Pain in muscles.
- Pain in rib bones.
- Pain while walking or working.
- Weariness with slightest work.
- Pain on touching the bones of hands and legs.

Treatment is the best alternative to overcome any disease. Therefore it is necessary to be aware towards Osteoporosis. Active life style is the only method to prevent this disease. Besides, there are many other ways of preventing this problem.

- It is ideal to get bone density test done after the age of 30 years.
- Calcium supplement and increasing calcium intake in daily diet.
- Yog practice can also be helpful in preventing weakening of bones. It helps in maintaining good co-ordination between ovaries, pituitary glands, parathyroid glands and other vital glands, which maintains the hormone secretion essential for proper bone density.
- Vitamin D intake should be maintained.
- Curd, milk, cottage cheese and cheese should be consumed.

- The bones will become strong and you can save yourself from any bones disease. Keep the bones strong.
- Avoid cold drinks.
- Protein consumption should be proper. Soybeans, beans, gram flour, black gram, kidney beans are rich in proteins.
- Orange juice, buttermilk, almond, green vegetables should be consumed.
- Reduce intake of caffeine and salt.
- Practice Yog, aerobics, walking, jumping, playing hockey, cricket, football. This keeps the body active, and prevents diseases.
- Avoid liquor and smoking.

It is not necessary that Osteoporosis could occur only in old age or only in women. Anybody can suffer from this problem. It is necessary to maintain the strength of the bones and proper treatment in consultation with the doctor

Treatment

Preventing Osteoporosis disease is the best method treatment. However, it is necessary to cure it in case of occurrence. Nowadays L.C.P. technology is used to cure it. This plate technique is a new gift. The main qualities of this technique are that it develops biomechanical qualities. In olden days the bones used to not get joined properly due to growing age and osteoporosis. But now it is not the case. LCP technique can be used to join the broken bones. This technique restores blood circulation in the fractured area. Another advantage is that the patient need not get admitted into the hospital for long duration and gets relief within a short period.

ANNOUNCEMENT

For the information of readers of 'Yog Sandesh' and yog teachers

All readers of 'Yog Sandesh'!

Only draft or Money Order is accepted for subscription to 'Yog Sandesh'. For those subscriptions sent in the proper method before the 15th of the month, the newsletter will be sent from the next month and for those subscriptions received after the 15th of the month, the newsletter will be sent after two months.

Please register complaints only after waiting till the 15th of each month. Whichever month you do not get the newsletter, register your complaint in that month with reference to the I.D./D. D./Money Order/receipt number. The newsletter will be sent again to you. Please check with the concerned postman also.

If Yoga teacher is the recipient of the newsletter, please mention complete address and specify the language you want the newsletter in. Please submit details in Hindi or English only. Yoga teachers often complain of not receiving their copies. Because of wrong address, newsletters are sent back to the Ashram. All yoga teachers are requested to correct their address at the 'Yoga teaching and training department' otherwise they will be responsible for non-receipt of the newsletter.