Press Release

Keep osteoporosis at bay with 20 minutes in sunlight and a glass of milk

_Osteoporosis and vitamin D deficiencies are the two silent epidemics of the society._

New Delhi, March 17, 2017: Estimates report that 1 out of 8 males and 1 out of 3 females in India suffers from osteoporosis, this essentially makes India one of the worst hit countries of the world.

Drinking less milk, avoiding sunlight exposure and omitting the traditional aerobic indoor games are few reasons for these new epidemics. Most young professionals now remain confined to their offices or workplace, with practically no exposure to sunlight. This is especially true for the medical residents.

Padma Shri Awardee Dr K K Aggarwal, President Heart Care Foundation of India (HCFI) and National President Indian Medical Association (IMA) in a joint statement said, “Osteoporosis, also called ‘the silent disease’ often goes unnoticed until the symptoms start to manifest. Early recognition of symptoms and preventive measures can help those who suffer. Identify your risk factors: and bring these to your doctor’s attention, especially if you’ve had a previous fracture or have specific diseases and/or are taking medications that affect bone health. Take osteoporosis medicine, if needed: Treatment will help to improve bone miner density (BMD) and reduce risk of fracture.”

“A bone healthy diet including good amount of protein and calories as well as optimal amounts of calcium and vitamin D, which are important in maintaining proper bone formation and bone density is crucial for managing osteoporosis. Moreover, controlling caffeine, alcohol and salt has been proven to prevent bone loss. To strengthen the skeletal architecture and improve bone density, exercising for at least 30 minutes three times per week is advised”, adds Dr K K Aggarwal.

Here are a few tips for preventing osteoporosis and strengthening the bones.

- Stop smoking as it increases bone loss.
- Eat a calcium-rich diet: The aim should be to get 1,500 mg of calcium a day in postmenopausal woman or a man over age 65. Good dietary sources of calcium include dairy products, tofu and other soy products, orange juice fortified with calcium, canned salmon with the bones, and cooked spinach.
- Get enough vitamin D: Vitamin D levels are influenced by how much sunlight one gets. Levels tend to decrease in older adults, especially in winter and in people who are unable to leave their home. Consider taking a supplement to ensure intake of the recommended daily amount.
- Get exposure to sunlight of at least 20 min per day. The exposure should be for duration of 20 min every day for a month in a year.
- Get enough protein in diet: An adequate intake of protein in diet, combined with an adequate intake of calcium helps increase bone density. One should aim for about 12% of calories to come from proteins such as legumes, poultry, seafood, meat, dairy products, nuts and seeds. However, too much protein with too little calcium can be harmful.
- Weight-bearing exercise: These are activities such as walking, jogging and climbing stairs that one should do on the feet, with your bones supporting your weight. They work directly on the bones of the legs, hips and lower spine to slow mineral loss.
- Weightlifting exercises: These exercises, also called resistance training or strength training. They strengthen muscles and bones in the arms, chest and upper spine. They can work directly on the bones to slow minerals loss.
- Get adequate vitamin K: This vitamin may be helpful in enhancing bone strength. Green leafy vegetables are the best sources of vitamin K. If one is taking a blood thinner, he or she should check with the doctor.
- Avoid excessive alcohol: Women should limit alcohol consumption to less than one ounce a day and men should limit it to less than two ounces.
- Limit cola drinks: People who have high cola intake often have lower bone density.

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About IMA: Indian Medical Association is the only representative, national voluntary organization of Doctors of Modern Scientific System of Medicine, which looks after the interest of doctors as well as the well being of the community at large. It has its Headquarters in Delhi and State / Terr. Branches in 30 States and Union Territories. It has over 2,60,000 doctors as its members through more than 1765 active local branches spread across the country.

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