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## **Strong Bones – Using Diet to Prevent Osteoporosis**

Did you know that osteoporosis or brittle bones, affects 1 out of 4 women and 1 out of 8 men?

According to Osteoporosis Canada, “Osteoporosis is a disease characterized by low bone mass and deterioration of bone tissue. This leads to increased bone fragility and risk of fracture (broken bones), particularly of the hip, spine and wrist.”

Bone mass accumulates until the age of 30, so anything which disrupts bone growth prior to that age can significantly increase osteoporosis risk. Anyone with a chronic condition or medications should talk to their physician about their risks and what can be done.

Although there are medications that offer assistance, there is so much that can be done to prevent the condition before it wreaks its toll. This week, I’m going to talk about how making changes in your lifestyle can reduce your risk for osteoporosis.

### **Calcium and Vitamin D – Your Best Defense**

A diet with sufficient calcium and vitamin D will help reduce your osteoporosis risk. Similarly, adding weight-bearing exercise, quitting smoking and limiting caffeine and alcohol consumption will also offer additional benefits.

### **Dried Plums – Anti-Osteoporosis in Action**

Dried plums may be the next thing to add to your anti-osteoporosis diet! A study in the British Journal of Nutrition showed participants who consumed dried plums regularly had greater bone density at the end of a 12-month period. It is thought the plums have the ability to reduce the rate at which bones are broken down. Researchers recommended starting with 2-3 dried plums daily, gradually increasing to 6-10 per day.

### **Vitamin C - Improving Bone Density**

A nutrient you may never have considered as a treatment for osteoporosis is vitamin C! A deficiency of vitamin C causes scurvy – a condition which has harmful effects on bone growth – and now research is showing that large doses of vitamin C actually promote bone growth. At least, in mice! No word on what the dose translates to in humans, but the therapeutic potential is very positive.

Your best source of nutrients, such as calcium, is your diet – but not everyone's diet hits the mark. Ask our pharmacists about a "calcium calculator" to determine how we can help you with your specific supplementation needs.