



November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2014

## It's All About the Bones

Osteoporosis is often thought of as a woman's condition, but while women may be more prone, men can certainly suffer from it as well. In Canada, about 1 in 3 women and 1 in 5 men will suffer from a fracture due to osteoporosis during their lifetime, according to Osteoporosis Canada. Researchers studying the relationship between weight and osteoporosis have noted that men with excess abdominal fat are at a significantly higher risk of developing bone loss. This is in addition to the additional risk abdominal fat brings for heart disease and diabetes. Definitely not the kind of weight your body wants to bear!

### Treatment Approaches

A study out of Texas is suggesting that it may be possible to take a "drug holiday" from bisphosphonates such as Fosamax, used to treat osteoporosis. The study included more than 28,000 women and demonstrated no increased risk for hip fracture in patients who had taken the bisphosphonate for at least 3 years then stopped for up to one year. It's hoped this can pave the way for managing the side effects of these drugs.

There are several treatment approaches to osteoporosis, but which one is best? There are no head-to-head trials of the different medication classes, but a recent retrospective review has found fairly similar efficacy with the main differences being in the safety profile or side effects of the medications. All the more reason to discuss your health history with your physician to individualize your approach.

### Keep Your Bones Strong

Your bones are the frame on which your body is built. They are designed to withstand a lot of pressure, but when they're not strong, a break can lead to much reduced quality of life. Two things keep your bones in tip top shape: diet and exercise. Everyone knows calcium builds bones, but vitamin D and vitamin K also play a role. And, your bones need weight-bearing exercise for strength.

November is Osteoporosis Month. Your pharmacist is a wealth of information – from good dietary sources of calcium to what, exactly, constitutes "weight-bearing" exercise. Your bones will thank you for the help!