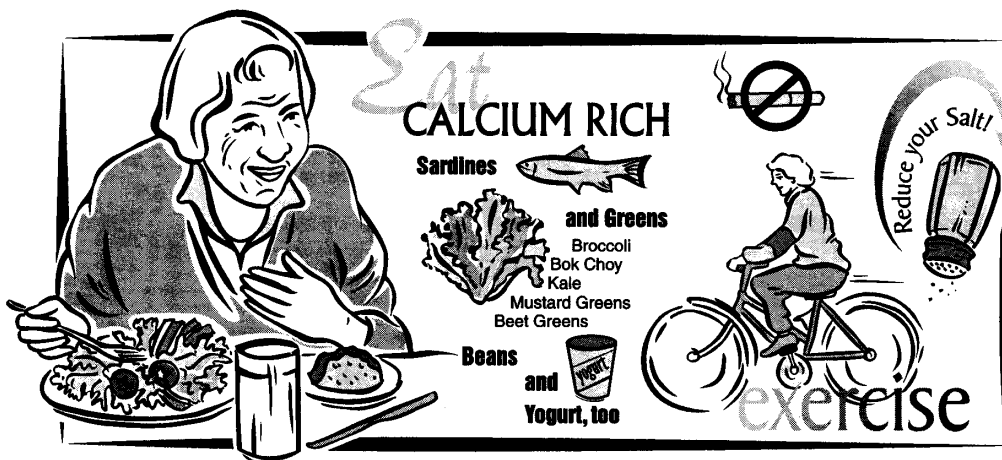




SENIOR HEALTH

Osteoporosis

WHAT IT IS AND HOW YOU CAN REDUCE YOUR RISK



After the age of 40, everyone's bones begin to lose density at a rate of about 1 percent each year. After menopause, women start losing about 2 to 3 percent of their bone mass. When the bone loss becomes excessive, the condition is called osteoporosis. Because there are no simple, low-cost screening tests for this disorder, the first sign of osteoporosis is often a broken bone.

WAYS TO REDUCE YOUR RISK

- ▶ Eat a diet that includes a minimum of 1000 milligrams of calcium a day for men and premenopausal women, and 1500 milligrams a day for postmenopausal women.
- ▶ Quit smoking. It makes you more prone to bone fractures.
- ▶ Limit your intake of alcohol. Heavy alcohol consumption may accelerate osteoporosis.
- ▶ Exercise regularly.
- ▶ Limit your intake of caffeine.
- ▶ Reduce your intake of sodium.
- ▶ If you're a postmenopausal woman, ask your doctor about hormone replacement therapy.
- ▶ If you take cortisone-type medications, anticonvulsants or heparin, consult your doctor. These medications may reduce bone strength.