Your bone health

Prevention and management of osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is a disease that affects the bones. This disease occurs when there is loss of bone mass or density, so the bones become weak and are more prone to fractures.

Risk factors that may increase the likelihood of developing osteoporosis:

- Being a woman
- Advanced age
- Menopause or low levels of estrogen
- Family history of osteoporosis or fractures
- Race (Latino, Caucasian or Asian)
- A diet poor in calcium and vitamin D
- Being thin or small boned
- Lack of exercise or being long-term bedridden
- Use of certain medications such as steroids
- Use of alcohol and/or cigarettes

Osteoporosis can cause:

- Loss of height
- Arched or hunching posture
- Limitations on movement and decreased participation in daily activities
- Fractures
How is osteoporosis diagnosed?
Osteoporosis is diagnosed by a bone mineral density test (BMD) or bone densitometry test. This test is performed to see if the bones have lost density before a fracture occurs. Consult with your doctor if you should get a bone density test.

Measures to protect your bones:
• Consult with your doctor about osteoporosis and both the bone mineral density and the bone densitometry tests.
• Eat Calcium-rich foods, and ask your doctor what is the right amount of calcium for you and whether you should take a supplement.
• Consume Vitamin D to be able to absorb Calcium. You can get it from foods such as fortified milk, salmon, tuna, egg yolk or liver. Ask your doctor if you should take a supplement.
• Maintain a balanced diet that includes fruits, vegetables, dairy products and fish. High amounts of sodium and caffeine can cause bone loss.
• Avoid alcohol consumption and quit smoking.
• Do exercises to strengthen your bones and muscles. Some recommended exercises include: walking, jogging, dancing and lifting weights. It is important to consult with your doctor before starting an exercise routine.
• Avoid falls, they are the leading cause of bone fractures. Check for objects or areas that may increase your risk of falling at home.

If you have suffered a fracture, ask your doctor for a bone density test or if you need medication to prevent or treat osteoporosis.

At MCS Classicare (HMO) we take care of your health so you feel better every day.

References:
National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, NIH
http://www.niams.nih.gov/Health_Info/Bone/Osteoporosis/osteoporosis_ff.asp
National Institute on Aging, NIH
http://www.nia.nih.gov/node/1271

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