

## The 3 M's for Bone Health

*It's never too early to start thinking about your bones especially when it comes to preventing osteoporosis. Typically, bones are strong, dense and solid, like a brick. But in osteoporosis, bone density is very low. This makes the bones weak, thin and porous, like a sponge. Because there are no symptoms, you might not know you have osteoporosis until you break a bone. Here are the 3 M's you should know for bone health.*

### **Maximize bone density**

Building strong bones during childhood and adolescence can be the best defense against developing osteoporosis later. Healthy children between the ages of 9 and 18 need more calcium than anyone else (1300 mg of calcium every day) and should be consuming 400 IU of vitamin D daily. The thicker the bones are, the longer it takes to develop osteoporosis. By age 16, girls reach their maximum bone mass. For boys, this occurs by age 20.



### **Maintain bone density**

By our mid-30's, both women and men begin to lose bone density. Getting enough calcium and vitamin D is still important now to slow down bone loss. Adults aged 19-50, including pregnant and breastfeeding women, need 1000 mg of calcium and 400 – 1000 IU of vitamin D daily.

### **Minimize bone loss**

We naturally lose bone density as we grow older. Older women are especially at risk for osteoporosis. Estrogen normally helps to keep women's bones healthy, but at menopause, estrogen levels drop dramatically, causing women to lose bone density faster than ever - at a rate of two to five percent each year. It is recommended that adults over 50 consume 1200 mg of calcium and 800 – 2000 IU of vitamin D per day.

We can also minimize bone loss by engaging in regular weight-bearing and strengthening exercises to help keep our bones strong. Some examples of weight bearing exercises include

- Aerobics
- Dancing
- Tai Chi/Yoga
- Climbing Stairs
- Walking/Jogging/Running
- Resistance Training (ex: squats, push-ups, etc.)