



IS IT POSSIBLE TO REGAIN BONE DENSITY

The amount of bone mineral density (BMD) that a person with osteoporosis can regain varies from person to person. However once a significant amount of bone density has been lost, it is hard to replace. For many people, the goal of treatment is to stabilize bone density at the current level and prevent any further bone loss. If you have low bone mass, you can get the most bone health benefits by following these steps:

EXERCISE

Bone is living tissue that responds to exercise by becoming stronger. Weight-bearing exercise, such as walking, dancing and running, and resistance exercise, such as lifting weights, can help you improve and maintain your BMD. Exercise also improves muscle strength and balance which can help to prevent falls that may result in broken bones.

EAT A HEALTHY DIET (AND TAKE SUPPLEMENTS IF NECESSARY)

Calcium and vitamin D are important for keeping bones strong and healthy. Adults under age 50 need 1,000 mg of calcium and 400--800 IU of vitamin D₃ daily.

Dr. Paul Miller recommends that adults age 50 and over take 1,500 – 2,000 mg of calcium and 1,000 – 2,000 IU of vitamin D3 daily. Try to limit intake from supplements to 500mg daily.

If you are getting the recommended amounts, keep up the good work. If you haven't been getting enough of these vitamins and minerals, try adding them to your daily routine. This change may help you to slow or prevent further bone loss.

QUIT SMOKING AND DRINKING EXCESSIVE ALCOHOL

Quit unhealthy habits such as smoking and excessive alcohol use (for example, drinking more than two alcoholic drinks daily). These changes may help people increase BMD and prevent further bone loss.

AVOID MEDICATIONS THAT MAY CAUSE BONE LOSS

If you are able to stop taking a medication that may cause bone loss, your BMD may increase at first. You can also ask your healthcare provider about prescribing the lowest possible dose for your health condition. Always talk to your healthcare provider before making any changes to your medications.

TAKE OSTEOPOROSIS MEDICATIONS AS PRESCRIBED

Your healthcare provider may prescribe a medication for your osteoporosis. There are several medications which can slow bone loss; these are called antiresorptive medications. When you first start taking them, you stop losing bone as quickly as you did before, but you still make new bone at a normal pace. These medicines can increase BMD by small amounts in some people and stabilize bone density in others.

For people with severe osteoporosis who are at risk for broken bones, there is one osteoporosis medication which actually speeds up your rate of bone formation. This is called an anabolic medication and can lead to greater increases in BMD. Talk to your healthcare provider to find out if an osteoporosis medication is right for you.

Source: Paul D. Miller, MD, National Osteoporosis Foundation Publication