

Help Maintain Bone Health in Men with Prostate Cancer

It is important that men living with prostate cancer pay special attention to bone health, since the cancer itself and certain treatments for the disease can increase their risk of bone complications.



6 Steps to Help Keep Bones Healthy

Fortunately, you can try to protect your bone health and help prevent osteoporosis during cancer treatment. Here are six simple strategies:

What You Can Do

Step 1: Get your daily requirement of calcium and vitamin D

Make sure your diet includes an adequate amount of calcium and vitamin D—two of the main building blocks of strong bones. Foods rich in calcium include dairy products, dark leafy greens, and beans. Vitamin D, which is formed naturally in the skin when it is exposed to sunlight, is available in foods such as fortified milk and cereal, egg yolks, and fatty fish.

If you do not get enough calcium and vitamin D through your diet, you should consider a dietary supplement. Your sample bottle contains 60 tablets, each tablet containing 400 IU of vitamin D and 600 mg of calcium, providing you a 1-month's supply when taking 2 tablets daily. This can help you meet the daily amounts recommended by the National Osteoporosis Foundation and the National Comprehensive Cancer Network for adults 50 years of age and older.

Step 2: Exercise

Exercise should be part of your routine. Activities may include regular weight bearing and muscle strengthening exercises, such as walking, dancing, stair climbing, and light weight lifting. These activities help strengthen bones by stressing them naturally. Talk with your doctor about an exercise program tailored to your needs.

Step 3: Maintain a healthy lifestyle

Smoking and excessive alcohol consumption are risk factors for developing osteoporosis. Quitting smoking appears to reduce the risk of low bone mass and fractures. Excessive alcohol use interferes with the balance and absorption of calcium in the body, which can lead to more falls and related fractures.

Step 4: Talk to your doctor about a bone density test

A bone mineral density (BMD) test is the only way to detect low bone density and diagnose osteoporosis. The lower a person's bone density, the greater the risk of having a fracture. The National Osteoporosis Foundation (NOF) recommends a BMD of the hip and spine by a central dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry (DEXA) scan to diagnose osteoporosis.

Step 5: See if medication is an option

If you are at high risk for fracture, your doctor can prescribe a medication that can help protect against bone loss. One medication—known as a bisphosphonate—helps increase bone mass while you continue on your prostate cancer treatment. Your doctor can help you decide whether medication might be right for you.

Step 6: Don't ignore symptoms

If you are experiencing painful joints, back pain, or stiffness, report these symptoms to your doctor as soon as possible. People can have osteoporosis without any signs or symptoms. Remember, many factors can influence the development of osteoporosis and fractures, such as smoking, excessive alcohol intake, lack of exercise, inadequate calcium and vitamin D intake, and the use of specific drugs such as glucocorticoids, proton pump inhibitors, anticoagulants, and certain antidepressants.

Stay Healthy, Stay Active

Healthy bones are essential to helping maintain a good quality of life. Strong, healthy bones can allow you to participate in your daily activities with less pain or loss of mobility.

Androgen deprivation therapy (ADT)—the use of luteinizing hormone releasing hormone (LHRH) therapy—is commonly used in the treatment of localized and advanced prostate cancer. LHRH agonists slow the growth of prostate cancer by decreasing the amount of testosterone in the blood. However, low testosterone levels can cause bone loss, putting you at risk for osteoporosis. Osteoporosis is a condition in which bones become fragile and can fracture or break much more easily.

Additional Resources

American Society of
Clinical Oncology
2318 Mill Rd., Suite 800
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: 571-483-1300
<http://www.asco.org/>

American Urological
Association Foundation
1000 Corporate Blvd.
Linthicum, MD 21090
Toll Free: 866-746-4282
Phone: 410-689-3700
www.UrologyHealth.org

CancerCare
275 Seventh Ave.
New York, NY 10001
Toll Free: 800-813-HOPE
(800-813-4673)
Phone: 212-712-8400
www.cancercares.org

Calcium/Vitamin D supplements provided by Watson Pharma, Inc.

National Comprehensive
Cancer Network (NCCN)
275 Commerce Dr., Suite 300
Fort Washington, PA 19034
Phone: 215-690-0300
<http://www.nccn.org/index.asp>

National Osteoporosis Foundation
1232 22nd Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037-1202
Toll Free: 800-231-4222
Phone: 202-223-2226
<http://www.nof.org/>

Prostate Cancer Foundation
1250 Fourth St.
Santa Monica, CA 90401
Toll Free: 800-757-CURE (800-757-2873)
Phone: 310-570-4700
www.prostatecancerfoundation.org

