



Osteoporosis Canada

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COPING

‘A newsletter from COPN’

April 1, 2011

Remember: You can live well with osteoporosis!

Bone Appétit: New Information on Calcium & Vitamin D

During the November 17, 2010 virtual education forum on nutrition and osteoporosis a number of questions were asked of the two presenters Anna Pohorecky and Wendy Borody and although many were answered during the forum time ran out before the experts were able to answer all. In this and the upcoming COPING newsletter we will be providing the answers to those questions.

Please note that the virtual education forum is still available for viewing on www.osteoporosis.ca. Click on “COPN Patient Network” on the left hand side, and then click on “Virtual Forum” for more information. If you have any questions, please email cPatientNetwork@osteoporosis.ca or call 1-800-463-6842 ext. 224.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS – Part 2

6. Is there a decline of acid in the stomach as people age? If so, would this make calcium citrate a form of calcium that is better absorbed in the older population?

Answer: Yes. As we go through the aging process, there is a change in the level of acidity in the stomach. In older individuals calcium citrate may be better tolerated.

7. I have to take medications 4 times a day. I was told to avoid taking calcium supplements for at least 2 hours before or after medications. How can I get around this?

Answer: There are only a few medications that can be affected by your calcium supplement. I would recommend that you discuss all of your medications, including

supplements and over-the-counter medications, in detail with your pharmacist or your health care provider. They can show you how to put it all together.

8. Does a high fibre diet reduce calcium absorption?

Answer: The current calcium recommendations account for some of the absorption and food/nutrient interactions that normally occur with digestion. There is no need to go above and beyond the recommendations of 1000 mg or 1200 mg of elemental calcium per day even if you have a relatively high amount of fibre in your diet.

9. Calcium carbonate or calcium citrate, which is best?

Answer: In terms of how they benefit bones, they are equal. Which you choose will depend on personal tolerance and personal preference. What is “better” for one person might not be “better” for someone else.

10. I am avoiding dairy products (except cheese) as I was recently diagnosed with estrogen fed breast cancer and it has been recommended that the estrogen in cow's milk is not good for me to consume. Do you have other recommendations for me to ensure I get enough calcium?

Answer: In Canada, hormones are not approved for use in dairy cattle and therefore milk does not contain a significant amount of hormones. (source: A Nutrition Guide for Women with Breast Cancer; BC Cancer Agency & Health link BC) As a result, you probably do not need to avoid cow's milk. However, there are other non-dairy sources of calcium on Osteoporosis Canada's website that can help you if you are still uncomfortable with consuming cow's milk. Go to www.osteoporosis.ca, click on Osteoporosis and you, then Nutrition to find a food sources of calcium chart.

11. I have been told that on the day I take my Actonel®, I should not take my calcium supplements. Should I also limit my calcium intake from my diet on that day?

Answer: You do not have to limit the calcium in your diet on the day that you take your Actonel®. However, you do need to avoid anything but water for the first half hour. You need to take Actonel® separately from food and separately from your calcium supplement and any other medications. After you take your Actonel® first thing in the morning with plenty of water, you cannot eat or drink anything or take any other medications (except for water) for the first half hour. You also cannot lie down or bend over for the first half hour. After that, you can eat and drink freely and you may take

other medications or supplements or exercise freely. Some physicians recommend that you wait a full hour after your Actonel® dose before you take a calcium supplement.

Funny Bone

Q. What's the best day for monkey business?

A. The first of Ape-ril!

Notices/references

i. Remember: It is important for you to eat a calcium rich diet (take calcium supplements, if necessary), get some appropriate exercise, take your vitamin D and if your doctor has prescribed a medication don't forget to take it as directed.

ii. COPING Weekly will come to you every second Friday. We hope you enjoy it and find the information useful. Remember to log on to www.osteoporosis.ca for up-to-date information.

iii. The material contained in this newsletter is provided for general information only. It should not be relied on to suggest a course of treatment for a particular individual or as a substitute for consultation with qualified health professionals who are familiar with your individual medical needs. Should you have any healthcare-related questions or concerns, you should contact your physician. You should never disregard medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have read in this or any newsletter.

iv. To have your name removed from the COPN mailing list please contact us at the email below. **You must provide the first and last name for which you registered in order to be removed from this list.**

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This issue of COPING is sponsored by Gay Lea

