

Heart Disease in Women

Research suggests that boosting bone density may also prevent heart disease.

Question: A recent news report stated that having thin bones is a risk factor for heart disease in women. How can I keep my bones strong and healthy?

C.F., Tempe, Arizona

Answer: The report you're referring to was recently published in the American Journal of Epidemiology. Researchers analyzed data from the Framingham Heart Study.

The subjects were free from heart disease at the beginning of the study (1967-1970). They were then followed through the end of 1997 to assess the rate of heart disease, which ranged from nearly 12 to nearly 16 cases per 1,000 people per year for groups with the thickest to thinnest bones in the hand, respectively. (Interestingly, no association between heart disease risk and bone mass was seen in men.)

According to the researchers, these results suggest that boosting bone density may also prevent heart disease. To stop or slow bone loss, increase bone density and reduce fracture risk, physicians may prescribe medications. However, these medications can be accompanied by side effects such as abdominal or musculoskeletal pain, nausea, heartburn and hot flashes.

Hormone replacement therapy, or HRT, has been shown to be effective at preventing or treating osteoporosis in menopausal or post-menopausal women but is now considered to be a risk

factor for increasing the incidence of vascular diseases and certain types of cancers.

Simple lifestyle changes—such as not smoking and getting enough exercise (in particular, weight-bearing exercises: walking, jogging, resistance training, lifting weights) are very effective ways to protect your bones and keep them strong.

Most important, you need to get the proper balance of the essential nutrients needed for healthy bones. We all know that calcium is essential to bone health, yet the average American consumes only about 600 mg (milligrams) of calcium a day. In contrast, the National Academy of Sciences recommends 1,000 mg a day for adults under age 50 and 1,200 milligrams for those over 50.

But calcium alone isn't enough to prevent bone loss. Magnesium, potassium, boron, manganese, zinc, copper and silicon—as well as vitamins C, D and K and a combination of isoflavones—are needed to strengthen all the components of bone tissue.

It's almost impossible to get enough of these nutrients through diet alone. Therefore, make a high-quality supplement balanced with all the key ingredients I mentioned part of a complete program to keep your bones strong.

Question: Heart disease is a major health concern these days, and I'd like to do everything I can to avoid it. Can taking a multivitamin help reduce my risk?

R.K., Omaha, Nebraska

Answer: Taking a multivitamin can help protect you from heart disease, but make sure it contains ample amounts of antioxidants, such as vitamins C and E and beta-carotene.

According to a study published in the American Journal of Epidemiology, a person can reduce his or her risk of dying from heart disease or stroke by taking a daily multivitamin in combination with antioxidants (compared with taking only a multivitamin or no vitamins at all).

The study was conducted over a seven-year period and consisted of more than 1 million adults over the age of 30. Participants took a multivitamin alone; vitamin A, C or E alone (each is an antioxidant); or a multivitamin with vitamin A, C or E.

The researchers then compared the death rates among the three groups with the death rates of people who did not take vitamins at all. They found that the adults who took a multivitamin with an antioxidant had the lowest risk of dying from heart disease and stroke.

In addition to eating healthfully, exercising regularly and watching your weight, taking a natural supplement that contains the right combination of nutrients—including the key antioxidants as well as folic acid, CoQ10 and grape seed extract, which are other heart-healthy nutrients—can preserve and nourish your body's cells as well as protect you from heart disease.

Reginald B. Cherry, M.D., has been practicing diagnostic and preventive medicine for more than 30 years and specializes in the use of nutrition, exercise and natural supplements to lower disease risk. He is the author of several best-selling

books, as well as a series of God's Pathway to Healing booklets, and teaches health and healing through his weekly TV program, The Doctor and the Word. For more about his ministry, go to .