Epilepsy and Bone Health

Women with epilepsy are at increased risk for osteoporosis (weak and brittle bone disease) and osteopenia (thinning of the bones). Falls and fractures may also occur at higher rates among women with epilepsy.

Factors that can increase your risk for low bone density include age, family history, lack of exercise, vitamin D deficiency, low calcium intake, smoking and other chronic illnesses. Women with epilepsy often have an earlier onset of menopause, which can also increase risk of lower bone density.

**How does seizure treatment affect bone health?**
Taking your seizure medication as prescribed is important for seizure control. However, it is also important to be aware that some seizure medications (anti-epileptic medications) may increase osteoporosis risk due to increased metabolism (breakdown) of vitamin D. Sufficient levels of vitamin D and calcium protect bone health.

**What can I do to maintain good bone health?**
- Do weight-bearing exercise
- Quit smoking
- Limit alcohol
- Consume sufficient amounts of calcium and vitamin D

**How can I prevent falls?**
- Take your medication to help prevent seizures
- Make sure there is enough light in your home so you can see where you are walking
- Remove throw rugs and clutter that may cause you to trip
- Put sturdy handrails on stairs
- Try exercises to increase your strength and balance

**What should I ask my doctor about bone health?**
Ask your doctor if additional calcium and vitamin D supplements may be right for you. For some patients, doctors may suggest additional testing, such as blood tests or bone density tests. If you have early bone loss, your doctor may prescribe medications to help stop this loss.

If you have epilepsy and are experiencing problems, please talk to your doctor or request a referral to the Women’s Epilepsy Clinic.

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