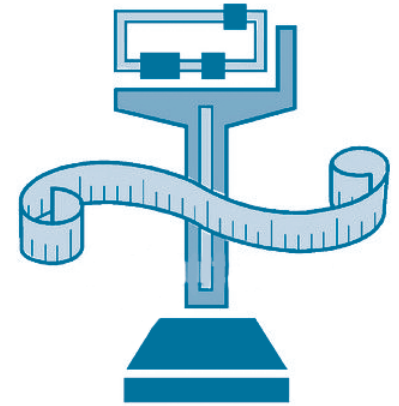


Protecting Your Spine - *While Losing Weight*

Want to lose weight? Don't lose bone!

Studies have shown that individuals who are dieting and lose weight also experience bone loss — a decrease in bone mineral density and in body minerals. However, those who took calcium supplements were able to reduce bone loss.



Before beginning a weight loss program, talk to your doctor so he or she can help you maintain bone and mineral density, and also evaluate any underlying health conditions with your exercise program in mind. Even if your diet contains the officially recommended amount of calcium, you should still take calcium supplementation during weight loss to protect your bones. Talk to your doctor about the right amount for you.

Other things you can do to help protect your spine during weight loss include*;

- Drink plenty of water.
- Discuss your weight loss plan with your doctor, and have an examination to rule out health risks.
- Take vitamin D to improve calcium absorption.
- Avoid highly restrictive diets and instead eat a balanced diet.
- Use resistance and strength exercises to strengthen core muscles in the abdomen and gluteal muscles (reducing strain on spine) and to build resistance.
- Get aerobic exercise to help maintain bone density during weight loss.
- Stop smoking. (Smoking restricts blood flow to discs in the spine.)
- Stretch several times a day to improve flexibility.
- Maintain good posture to reduce back pain.
- Don't lift too much at one time.
- To reduce the strain on your spine while you sleep, place a pillow under your knees, or if lying on your side, place the pillow between your knees.

** Sources: North American Spine Society and Journal of Bone and Mineral Research*

For additional advice or consultation on spinal problems, you may request a referral from your primary care physician to the Indiana Spine Group. For details, visit www.indianaspinegroup.com or call (317) 228-7000.

