WOMEN AT SERIOUS RISK FOR OSTEOPOROSIS AND LIFE-THREATENING FRACTURES

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Nyon, Switzerland (October 17, 2013) - On World Osteoporosis Day, October 20, the International Osteoporosis Foundation (IOF) is calling for women to take action now to protect their bone health. Broken bones due to osteoporosis often result in pain, immobility and loss of quality of life as well as early death. In women over 45 years of age, osteoporosis accounts for more days spent in hospital than many other diseases, including diabetes, heart attack or breast cancer. The good news is that by knowing their risk early, women can take action to prevent and control osteoporosis.

Worldwide, an estimated 200 million women are affected by osteoporosis - a disease that causes bones to become weak and easily prone to fractures - and with an increasingly ageing population this number is set to rise dramatically. Unless something is done, future generations may live longer but their quality of life will be seriously compromised. Although women of any age may be at risk, at menopause women are especially vulnerable as they experience rapid bone loss.

Professor John A. Kanis, President, IOF said, “Osteoporosis is a serious threat to women’s health - worldwide one in three women over the age of 50 will suffer a broken bone due to osteoporosis. Yet too many women are unaware of their increased risk after menopause and fail to take preventive measures.”

IOF recommends five essential strategies to help maintain bone and muscle strength in later life:

1. Exercise 30-40 minutes, three to four times per week and ensure a mix of resistance training and weight-bearing exercise. As you age resistance training (e.g. using elastic bands, weight machines) becomes increasingly important.

2. Ensure a bone-healthy diet that includes enough dietary calcium and protein, with enough fruits and vegetables to balance the increased need for protein. Make sure you’re getting enough vitamin D too - through sunlight, diet, and supplementation if required.

3. Avoid negative habits such as smoking and excessive alcohol intake and maintain a healthy body weight. Women who are underweight are at higher risk compared to those with a normal body mass index.

4. Find out whether you may have personal factors that increase your risk of osteoporosis. Common risk factors include early menopause before the age of 45, use of glucocorticoids, rheumatoid arthritis, malabsorption disorders (e.g. celiac or Crohn’s disease), previous fragility fracture, or a family history of osteoporosis and fractures. An online risk test is available at: www.iofbonehealth.org
5. Menopause is the critical time to get your doctor to assess your bone health status. Ask for a fracture risk assessment (e.g. FRAX) and, if indicated, take a bone mineral density test. If treatment is prescribed ensure that you adhere to your therapy.

“Women are the pillars of strength for their families and communities. I urge all women approaching the menopause to take action for bone health now in order to enjoy good quality of life and independence long into the future.” said Judy Stenmark, CEO, IOF.

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Access the media kit

About World Osteoporosis Day
Observed annually on October 20, World Osteoporosis Day is led by IOF and dedicated to raising global awareness of osteoporosis and related musculoskeletal diseases. Join the new campaign to recognize strong women - nominate a ‘Woman of Steel’ and show your support by wearing white on World Osteoporosis Day. www.worldosteoporosisday.org; www.facebook.com/worldosteoporosisday; #womenofsteel

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