TALKING TO YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER ABOUT BONE HEALTH FOR BREAST CANCER SURVIVORS

Bone Health & Osteoporosis FOUNDATION™

Breast cancer—and some of the treatments for it, such as hormone therapy, chemotherapy, radiation, and medications—can make the bones weak, putting you at increased risk for broken bones or fractures.

There are steps that you can take to protect your bones. The first step is discussing your bone health with your health care provider.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Breast cancer that has spread to the bones (metastatic cancer, also known as bone metastasis) may also cause serious bone complications, known as skeletal-related events (SREs). These can lead to bone fractures, bone pain, hypercalcemia, and spinal cord compression. Tumors or lesions on the bones are called metastases or "mets".

Guidelines recommend that anyone diagnosed with breast cancer should have a baseline bone mineral density test, also known as a DXA scan, done prior to beginning treatments that weaken the bones. Be sure to ask for a copy of your bone density test results for you to keep at home.

QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU DISCUSS BONE HEALTH WITH YOUR PROVIDER

- **When should I have a bone mineral density test (DXA)?**

- **Should I have a blood test done to measure calcium and Vitamin D?**

- **Will any of the treatments or medications to treat my cancer weaken my bones?**

---

continued...

AFTER HAVING A BONE DENSITY TEST

- **What are my bone density test results and what do they mean for me?**

- **What is my risk of having a fracture?**

- **Is there anything I can do to strengthen my bones? (i.e. exercise, diet, calcium, vitamin D)**

- **Are there exercises that I should avoid?**

- **Are there bone-strengthening medicines that may help protect me from breaking a bone?**

- **Are there tests or exams I should have before starting a bone-strengthening medicine?**

- **If I consider a medicine for my bones, what are the benefits and risks?**

IF YOU HAVE METASTATIC BREAST CANCER

- **What is my risk of a serious bone complication or skeletal-related event (SRE) from metastases?**

- **What are "bone mets"?**

- **Are there ways to manage the risk of SREs?**

- **What treatments are available for SREs?**

BHOF
Bone Health & Osteoporosis FOUNDATION™

251 18th Street S, Suite 630
Arlington, VA, 22202
1 (800) 231-4222
info@bonehealthandosteoporosis.org

© 2024 Bone Health and Osteoporosis Foundation, © 2021 American Bone Health
All Rights Reserved

No part of this handout may be reproduced in any form without permission from the Bone Health and Osteoporosis Foundation.