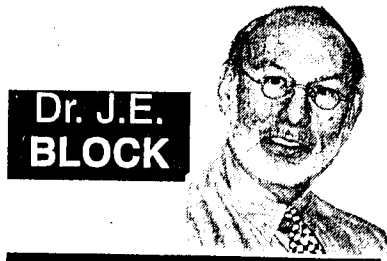


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All Things Medical



'Make no bones about it

Until recently, I've encouraged my patients to drink milk. We now know that protein, particularly milk protein (casein) promotes rather than retards osteoporosis. This error of Atkin's diet or other high protein diets such as the Eads diet may be more detrimental than beneficial.

Diane Feskanich, in the American Journal of Epidemiology, volume 143, #5, tracked medical histories of 78,000 middle-aged women for over ten years and found out women who drank two or more glasses of milk a day were far more likely to have a broken hip than those who drank less than one glass a week!! That is why the more dairy food people eat, the more likely they are to suffer fractures from osteoporosis. How could anything as wholesome as milk make

bones weaker?

The answer lies in the fact that the body breaks proteins into its amino acids. It then uses the acids to build muscle and other tissues. An excess of these acids remains in the blood stream, a condition that the body tries to correct. It reaches for the calcium in the bone to neutralize the acid, hence making the bone less dense.

Paradoxically, in older people the problem seems not to be the calcium as much as not having as much protein, which is reflected by their serum albumin, which is normally assessed in most physicians' offices.

For a variety of reasons, older people have poor nutrition. For better absorption, I do recommend calcium taken apart from meals. This has additional benefits in preventing heart disease, particularly by the reduction in blood pressure. It also prevents colon cancer, according to researchers at Dartmouth, relieves premenstrual syndrome and reduces the incidence of kidney stones. To prevent stones, it is usually recommended the calcium be taken with meals.

More on this next week.