

Change your diet, change your life: bone loss reversed with diet changes

Jean Fritz, Indianapolis Cooking Examiner

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Mention the word "osteoporosis" and the image of an elderly matron with a dowager's hump toddling along comes to mind. But Mira Calton was far from that image. Ms. Calton was 30 years old, running a public relations firm in Manhattan working to develop a high profile for the fashion designers she represented and living a high stress life. Looking at her life from a distance, an observer would believe this was a woman who had everything - independence, glamour, all of the trappings of the good life. The one thing that an observer wouldn't see was the constant, nagging backache that plagued Ms. Calton day after day.

Like many people, Mira chalked the pain off just as something that comes from being 30, from wearing stiletto heels or from sleeping in an awkward position. However, the pain worsened and brought mobility problems with it. Mira went to a physician who ordered x-rays, and then a bone density scan. It turned out that Ms. Calton had early onset osteoporosis; her bone density was equivalent to that of an 80-year old.

Ms. Calton was immediately put on osteoporosis medications, but the side effects of these drugs - nausea, abdominal pain and swallowing difficulty - were challenging. Ms. Calton states, "...After much soul searching, I decided not to follow the advice of my physician and I chose not to take the medication. Instead, I took my health into my own hands and began a search for an alternative natural treatment."

Her new life began by giving up her public relations firm and moving from Manhattan to Florida. The pace there was decidedly more leisurely and the climate more favorable to outdoor activities, allowing her to begin to exercise regularly. Fresh fruits and vegetables were readily available from local growers, so processed and packaged foods were soon replaced by farm-fresh citrus, tomatoes and greens. These changes still were not enough - Mira's pain persisted and bone scans still showed extreme thinning.

Then, Ms. Calton crossed paths with a nutritional theorist who had worked for 14 years with people dealing with lifestyle diseases and chronic illness. Dr. Jayson Calton found that the typical American diet was high in what he termed, "naked calories," or foods that are calorie dense but low in nutritive value. He also pinpointed lifestyle habits that rob the body of micronutrients - caffeine and alcohol consumption, smoking, and consuming foods or beverages that contain phosphoric acid or high fructose corn syrup (both are found in all brands of nondiet soda.) Oxalic acid was of particular concern in Mira's case, as it binds to calcium and inhibits its absorption. Spinach, kale and broccoli had to be eliminated.

Two years after Mira began a diet rich in micronutrients and eliminated those foods and habits that prevented the proper absorption of calcium, she had another bone density test. This time the results were normal for her age range, an event that shocked the nurse who read the results and insisted that the reversal of bone loss had to be a fluke. She even recommended that Mira begin taking medication to prevent the osteoporosis from recurring. Traditional physicians tend to be skeptical of the results as well, although Mira says that a few have been supportive of her diet and lifestyle changes.

According to the [Calton Nutrition](#) website, any diet can have its micronutrient content enhanced as long as nutrient-rich foods are made a priority, micronutrient depleting habits are eliminated and quality, well absorbed supplements are included daily. Mira advises that processed foods be eliminated and free-range animal products such as grass-fed beef and butter or free-range eggs be used to replace farm-raised animal products. Many of these products can be found in the Indianapolis area at farmers markets during the growing season, or purchased from Oberweis Dairy or Whole Foods.

Overcoming her health challenge motivated Ms. Calton to enter the field of nutrition as well. She has earned a Diploma in Comprehensive Nutrition from Huntington College of Health Sciences, and has completed the Yale University School of Medicine's OWCH (Online Weight Management Counseling for Healthcare Providers) program. Her complete story and information about micronutrients and their impact can be found in her newly-released book, [Naked Calories](#).