

OSTEOPOROSIS



OSTEOPOROSIS is a bone disease. It can lead to **bone breaks and other problems.**

But, with the right resources, you and your healthcare provider can create a treatment plan to help keep your bones strong.

For more information, helpful tips, and resources, visit:

www.BoneBalance.com





Learn About Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is a bone disease. It happens when your bones lose minerals, especially calcium. When bones lose minerals, they get weak and brittle. Over time, **this can cause breaks (fractures)**.

Each year, osteoporosis causes more than one million fractures. They happen most often in the back, hips, and wrists. These breaks can occur during simple movements, like bending and lifting. Falls can also cause fractures. Fractures can be painful. They can affect how you look and how active you can be.

A “silent disease”

Millions of Americans have osteoporosis. Millions more have low bone mass. This condition, called osteopenia, raises the risk for osteoporosis.

You can have osteoporosis and not know it. That’s why it’s sometimes called a “silent disease.” Many people don’t know that they have it, until they break a bone. Early diagnosis and treatment may lower your risk of fracture.

You may have symptoms, but not know that they’re from osteoporosis. These symptoms can be:

- Height loss
- Posture change
- Severe back pain

The good news is that osteoporosis can be treated. Some treatments not only stop bone loss, but also help to build bone.

See Your Healthcare Provider

If you have osteoporosis, or if you’re at risk for it, see your healthcare provider. He or she may order a test called a **bone-mineral density test**. It is quick, painless, and safe. It measures certain bones. These include the spine, wrist, hip, heel, or hand.

The test can help your healthcare provider to:

- Spot bone problems before you have a fracture.
- Confirm osteoporosis after a fracture.
- Predict your risk of fractures.
- See how your treatment is working.

The risk for osteoporosis gets higher with age. If you have any risk factors, **testing is more important as you grow older.**

If you learn that you have osteoporosis, you may feel worried or afraid. But, with the right medicine and lifestyle changes, like eating right and exercising, **bone loss can be reversed.**



▼ **Signs of osteoporosis include severe back pain and a loss of height.**



Know The Risk Factors

Most people with osteoporosis are women. Men can get osteoporosis, too, but they get it less often.

Ask your healthcare provider if you're at risk for osteopenia or osteoporosis. Fill out this checklist. Discuss it with your healthcare provider at your next office visit.

Risk-factor checklist

- I'm over age 65.
- I've broken a bone after age 50.
- A close relative has osteoporosis or has broken a bone after age 50.
- My health is "fair" or "poor."
- I smoke.
- I am underweight for my height.
- I am a woman who started menopause before age 45.
- I've never gotten enough calcium.
- I have more than two drinks of alcohol several times a week.
- I have poor vision, even with glasses.
- I fall sometimes.
- I'm not active.

I have one of these medical conditions:

- Overactive thyroid
- Chronic lung disease
- Chronic liver or kidney disease
- Hyperparathyroidism
- Vitamin D deficiency
- Inflammatory bowel disease
- Cushing's disease
- Multiple sclerosis
- Rheumatoid arthritis

I take these medicines (prescription, over the counter, herbal):



▼ **Ask your healthcare provider if you're at risk for osteoporosis.**





Prevent Bone Loss

These tips can help you to hold onto your bone strength:

- **Watch your health.** Ask your healthcare provider about tests to check your bone-mineral density. This will help him or her to see if you have, or are at risk for, osteoporosis and might benefit from medicine.
- **Eat a balanced diet.** Get lots of calcium and vitamin D. Calcium helps your bones to stay strong and healthy. Vitamin D helps your body to take in the calcium it needs.
- **Be active.** Physical activity is good for your health. It also helps your bones. The best exercise for your bones is weight-bearing exercise.
- **Avoid alcohol.** It can harm cells that build bones. Alcohol can also reduce the amount of calcium in your body.
- **Avoid fad diets and don't skip meals.** They can keep you from getting the nutrients that your bones need to stay healthy.
- **Don't smoke.** People who smoke may absorb less of the calcium they take in.
- **Take medicine as prescribed.** If your healthcare provider prescribed medicine for osteoporosis, make sure you follow his or her directions exactly.

Always talk with your healthcare provider before starting an exercise or diet program.

Calcium Supplements & Vitamin D

If you don't get enough calcium in your diet, your healthcare provider may suggest a calcium supplement. These tips can help you to get the most from your supplement:

- **Take small doses.** Calcium is absorbed best when taken in several small doses.
- **Don't take calcium with iron supplements.** Calcium affects how your body absorbs iron. Take them at different times.
- **Talk with your healthcare provider** about possible interactions between your medicines and your calcium supplement.

Supplements don't replace calcium from food. Also, do not go over the total recommended daily amount. If you don't get enough vitamin D in your diet, your healthcare provider may suggest vitamin D supplements. There are also calcium plus vitamin D supplements available.

Prescription medicines

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved several medicines for osteoporosis. The goal of treatment is to maintain bone strength and prevent bone loss. This helps to decrease the risk of fractures.

There are several types of prescription medicines, and the choice of treatment should be tailored to your medical needs and lifestyle. Ask your healthcare provider if medicine may be an option for you.



Ask About Treatment Options

Prescription treatment for osteoporosis can help to slow, prevent, and even reverse bone loss. But treatment isn't just about medicine. Work with your healthcare provider to **choose an easy treatment plan that fits your lifestyle.**

Stay on track with your medicine long term, as prescribed by your healthcare provider. This can mean stronger, healthier bones and lower your risk of fractures.

Talk with your healthcare provider as to how you feel about your osteoporosis treatment. Share your answers to these questions to get the discussion started.

Treatment satisfaction questions

Are you happy with your current prescription treatment for osteoporosis?

- Yes No Not sure

Do you find that you sometimes miss a dose of your osteoporosis medicine?

- Often Sometimes Never

If you answered Often or Sometimes to the previous question, please select all the reasons why you missed a dose:

- You need to take it too often.
- It gets in the way of your normal routine.
- You have side effects.
- You forget to take your medicine.
- None of the above

Do you know the possible risks and benefits of the medicine(s) you take for osteoporosis?

- Yes No Not sure

Since you began taking medicine for osteoporosis, has your healthcare provider noticed any changes in your condition or your bone-mineral density score?

- Yes No I have not had a follow-up bone-mineral density test.





Eat Right

Your diet should include what you need for strong, healthy bones. That means getting enough calcium and vitamin D, and avoiding some habits that can affect your bone strength.

Calcium

Your body can't make calcium. You must get it through foods, drinks, and supplements. Not getting enough calcium is linked to an increased risk of fracture.

Your need for calcium changes over your lifetime. Kids and teens need a lot of calcium because their bones are growing. After menopause, women need more calcium. This may be because they have too little vitamin D. Also, your body can't absorb calcium that well as you age. So it's important to get enough to offset this change.

You can find calcium in many foods, like:

- **Dairy products**, such as low-fat or nonfat milk, cheese, yogurt, and ice cream
- **Dark, leafy green vegetables**, such as spinach, collard greens, bok choy, and broccoli
- **Almonds**
- **Fish**, such as sardines and salmon with bones
- **Foods with added calcium**, including orange juice, cereal, and breads, as well as products that have soy and tofu

Adults should get 1,000 mg to 1,500 mg of calcium each day.

Whatever your age, talk with your healthcare provider about how much calcium you need. If you don't get enough, he or she may suggest a supplement.

Vitamin D

Vitamin D helps your body to absorb calcium. Not getting enough vitamin D is linked to low bone mass. It may even increase your risk of fracture.

Good sources of vitamin D are fortified milk, fish, oysters, and fortified cereal. Sunlight also helps your skin to make vitamin D.

Your healthcare provider may suggest supplements, if you do not receive or make enough vitamin D.



After menopause, women need more calcium.



Stay Active

Physical activity is important, if you have osteoporosis. It can:

- Help you to build and keep your bone strength.
- Reduce your risk of falling and having a fracture.

Two types of exercise can help you to build and keep bone strength:

- 1. Weight-bearing exercises.** Your bones and muscles must work against gravity and/or bear weight.
- 2. Resistance exercises.** You use your muscles in ways that help to improve your muscle mass and strengthen your bones.

Talk with your healthcare provider before you start an exercise or diet program.

Everyday movements

These tips can help you to move more safely through your daily routine. Check with your healthcare provider, if you have any concerns or questions.

When standing

- Hold your head high and your chin in. Squeeze your shoulder blades slightly.
- Point your feet straight ahead.
- Shift your weight from one leg to the other from time to time, if you stand for prolonged times.

When sitting

- Choose upright chairs with arms rather than deep, cushioned chairs or couches that you “sink” into.
- Use a pillow or rolled towel to support your lower back.
- Align your head, back, and hips. Keep your hips and knees at the same level.
- Rest your feet flat on the floor. When seated for a long time, use a footstool or footrest.
- Don't slouch while reading or doing handwork.

When bending or lifting

- Bend from your hips and knees, and not your waist.
- While keeping proper back posture, bring the item close to your body at waist level. Use your leg and thigh muscles to lift the item, and stand again.

When doing chores

- Use both arms together when reaching overhead. Avoid twisting your spine.
- Face your work directly to prevent twisting your back.
- Lean forward from your hips and bend at your knees, instead of your waist.
- Shift your weight from one leg to the other when pushing a mop, broom, or vacuum.



Get Help With Lifestyle Changes

Everyone should eat a healthy diet and get exercise. But, if you have osteoporosis, it's even more important.

The changes that you make need to become part of your lifestyle. That will help your bones to stay strong now and into the future.

Your loved ones can help you to maintain strong bones and lower your risk of fractures. Involve your family early on. Here are some tips for how you can do that:

Communicate. Your family and friends can be a great support. Talk with them about your osteoporosis. Tell them what it means to your health, peace of mind, and activities.

Be ready to listen, too. As hard as that diagnosis may have been for you to hear, it may also concern those who love you. Consider these steps:

- Share your feelings about the condition.
- Talk about your concerns.
- Ask for what you need from them.
- Discuss treatments you're thinking about, or have tried, and any side effects you have had.

Educate. Explain your condition. Tell them how it can increase your risk of fracture. Describe the steps that you're taking to keep your bones strong.

Talk about any lifestyle changes you may need to make, like:

- Staying as active as you can. And, although you may need to make some minor lifestyle changes, explain that you are taking steps to improve your bone health.
- Asking family members for help with tasks that require bending, lifting, or carrying
- Suggesting simple ways that your family can fall-proof their own homes when you visit them, and help you to fall-proof yours, too
- Communicating how family members can help to support your treatment success, if you are taking prescription medicine

Support. If you have family or friends with osteoporosis, why not start an informal support network where you can share your experiences and learn from one another.



▼ **Ask family members to help you with lifestyle changes and treatment decisions.**



Care For Your Bones

The best defense against fractures is to take care of your body.

With the right medicine and lifestyle changes, including diet and exercise, you can get the strength that your bones need to resist breaks. This can help you to keep active and independent, now and in the future.

To help keep your bones strong:

- **See your healthcare provider.** Assess the steps you're taking to maintain bone health. Explore what's new in osteoporosis treatments.
- **Take your medicine.** If you are taking a prescription medicine to treat your osteoporosis, be sure to take it exactly as your healthcare provider tells you.
- **Eat a balanced diet,** rich in calcium and vitamin D.
- **Exercise regularly.** Simple activities, like walking or climbing stairs, will strengthen your bones.

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