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Members of the National Osteoporosis Foundation benefit by staying up to date on the latest bone health news and scientific advances. Your membership helps support research and education on osteoporosis.



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TAKE ACTION

Osteoporosis.
Chances are...
it could be you.

Osteoporosis and low bone mass affect 44 million Americans over the age of 50. With one in two women and one in four men age 50 and older at risk for osteoporosis-related fractures, Chances are... it could be you!

Osteoporosis literally means "porous bones." Instead of being strong and resilient, the bones of people with this disease become weak and fragile, breaking under minor stress. For people with osteoporosis, everyday activities like picking up a newspaper, lifting a child or tripping on a curb can cause a broken bone, called a fracture. Any part of the body can be affected, with fractures most commonly occurring in the wrist, the hip and the vertebrae of the spine. Pain, loss of independence and, sometimes, death can follow any osteoporotic fracture.

Take Action!

Know Your Risk

Many people do not understand that they could be at risk or that there are steps they can take to prevent and treat osteoporosis. Are you at risk for osteoporosis? You are if you:

- Have a personal history of fracture after age 50
- Have current low bone mass
- Have a history of fracture in a first degree relative (such as a parent or sibling)
- Are female
- Are thin and/or have a small frame
- Are of an advanced age
- Have a family history of osteoporosis
- Have estrogen deficiency as a result of menopause, especially early or surgically induced
- Have an abnormal absence of menstrual periods (amenorrhea)
- Have anorexia nervosa
- Have a low lifetime calcium intake
- Have vitamin D deficiency
- Use certain medications, such as corticosteroids and anticonvulsants
- Have certain chronic medical conditions
- Have low testosterone levels (men)
- Have an inactive lifestyle
- Currently smoke cigarettes
- Use an excessive amount of alcohol
- Are Caucasian or Asian, although African Americans and Hispanic Americans are at significant risk as well

The more risk factors you have, the more likely you are to have osteoporosis or suffer a fracture.

The good news is that—beginning today—you can take steps to protect your bones and reduce your risk of osteoporosis. No matter what your age, the National Osteoporosis Foundation's five steps to bone health and osteoporosis prevention can help your bones last a lifetime. The steps are:

- 1 Get your daily recommended amounts of calcium and vitamin D.** Calcium and vitamin D are essential building blocks of bone. If you are ages 19 to 50 years old, you need at least 1,000 mg of calcium a day. If you are older than 50, you need 1,200 mg daily. Most people know low-fat cheese, milk and other dairy products are good sources of calcium, but may not realize calcium also can be found in other foods like broccoli, dried figs and soybeans, as well as fortified juices and foods. You also should get 400-800 International Units of vitamin D a day. Your body makes vitamin D with sunlight exposure. It is also found in egg yolks, saltwater fish, liver and fortified milk.
- 2 Engage in regular weight-bearing exercise and resistance training.** Weight-bearing and resistance exercises are important for building and maintaining bone mass and density. Weight-bearing exercises are those in which your bones and muscles work against gravity, such as jogging, walking, and dancing. Resistance exercises use muscular strength to improve muscle mass and strengthen bone. Weight-bearing activities should be done at least four times a week and resistance training should be done two to three times a week.
- 3 Avoid smoking and excessive alcohol intake.** Smoking is bad for your bones, as well as your heart and lungs. Excessive alcohol intake (more than 2-3 oz. a day) may be damaging to the skeleton, even in young women and men. In addition, those who drink heavily have an increased risk of falling and are likely to be poorly nourished.
- 4 Talk to your doctor about bone health.** Your doctor or other healthcare professional can help you develop a personal bone health plan based on your individual risk factors and overall health. Even if your doctor does not raise the topic, make sure you do.
- 5 Have a bone density test and take medication when appropriate.** A bone mineral density test (BMD) is the only way to measure how much bone you currently have. A BMD test also can predict your risk of breaking a bone in the future. For people with osteoporosis or those at risk, your healthcare professional can help you decide whether to take a medication and which one is right for you.