

Am I at Risk for Osteoporosis?

Being at risk for osteoporosis means that you are more likely to get the disease. There are many reasons why you might be at risk for osteoporosis. Some of these reasons are:

Older age. You can get osteoporosis at any age, but older people are more likely than younger people to have it.

Being female. Osteoporosis is more common in women than men. Eighty percent of people with osteoporosis are women. If you're a woman, your risk of breaking a hip from osteoporosis is equal to your combined risk of breast, ovarian and uterine cancer.

Twenty percent of people with osteoporosis are men. If you're a man over the age of 50, you're more likely to break a bone from osteoporosis than you are to get prostate cancer.

Family history. If one or both of your parents had osteoporosis, you are more likely to get the disease. If either of your parents had broken bones as an adult, became much shorter or had a spine that curved forward, they probably had osteoporosis, even if it wasn't diagnosed.

Being small and thin. If you're a woman or man with small bones, you're more likely to get osteoporosis. But that doesn't mean larger or heavier people can't get it.

Lifestyle. Getting enough calcium, vitamin D and regular exercise is important for your bones. Eating fruits and vegetables is also good for bone health. While these things can help you prevent bone loss, you can have a healthy lifestyle and still be at risk for osteoporosis. On the other hand, eating poorly, smoking cigarettes, drinking too much alcohol or not exercising can cause bone loss and osteoporosis.

Other Diseases. Certain diseases can make you more likely to get osteoporosis. Some examples are celiac disease, diabetes, eating disorders and rheumatoid arthritis. Ask your doctor or other healthcare provider if you have any diseases or conditions that can cause osteoporosis.

Medicines. There are many medicines that can cause osteoporosis. Steroid medicines are one example. Many people need to take steroid medicines for allergies, arthritis, asthma, Crohn's disease, lupus and other conditions. Some medicines for breast cancer, depression, prostate cancer, seizures and other diseases can also cause osteoporosis. Ask your doctor, pharmacist or other healthcare provider if any of the medicines you take can increase your chances of getting osteoporosis.

How Much Calcium and Vitamin D Do I Need?

Age (years)	Pregnancy and Breastfeeding						
	1-3	4-8	9-18	19-49	50+	18 and under	19+
Daily Calcium Needs	500 mg	800 mg	1,300 mg	1,000 mg	1,200 mg	1,300 mg	1,000 mg
Daily Vitamin D Needs	400 IU*	400 IU*	400 IU*	400-800 IU	800-1,000 IU	400-800 IU	400-800 IU

*NOF does not have specific Vitamin D recommendations for these age groups. These are the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

What Foods Are Good for Your Bones?

Calcium is a mineral found in certain foods that can help keep your bones healthy. It's important throughout your life. The chart below shows the amount of calcium in many foods.

Food	Serving Size	Estimated calcium content in milligrams (mg) *
Milk Whole, low-fat or skim	1 cup	300
Yogurt and Ice cream Plain yogurt, fat-free or low-fat Ice cream, low-fat or high-fat	1 cup 1 cup	415 140-210
Cheese American Cheddar Cottage cheese, 1% milk fat Mozzarella, part skim Swiss	1 oz. 1 oz. 1/2 cup 1 oz. 1 oz.	175 205 70 205 220-270
Fish and Shellfish (canned) Sardines, canned in oil with bones Salmon, pink, canned with bones Shrimp, canned	3 oz. 3 oz. 3 oz.	325 180 125
Fruits and Vegetables Bok choy (chinese cabbage), raw Broccoli, cooked & drained Dried figs Kale, cooked Oranges Soybeans, mature, cooked & drained Turnip greens, fresh, cooked & drained	1 cup 1 cup 2 figs 1 cup 1 whole 1 cup 1 cup	75 60 55 95 50 175 200
Fortified Foods Fruit juice with added calcium Cereal with added calcium (without milk) Tofu prepared with calcium Soy milk with added calcium	6 oz. 1 cup 1/2 cup 1 cup	200-345 100-1,000 205 80-500

*The calcium content listed for most foods is estimated and can be different for several reasons such as fortification and fat content.

How to Choose a Calcium Supplement

If you don't get enough calcium from food, you may need to take a calcium supplement. Your doctor, pharmacist or other healthcare provider should be able to help you choose one that is right for you.

The amount of supplement you need depends on how much calcium you get every day from the foods you eat. It's important not to get too much calcium, because in rare cases it can be harmful. The following tips can also help you:

- Read the label carefully on the bottle or package. It will tell you how much calcium is in the supplement. The label also tells you how many doses or pills you must take to get that amount.
- Ask your doctor, healthcare provider or pharmacist if there could be any problems from taking a calcium supplement with any of your medicines and other supplements. For example, you shouldn't take an iron supplement at the same time of day as your calcium supplement.
- Take your supplement with food whenever possible. Many calcium supplements work best when taken at the same time as a meal or snack. Calcium citrate is one type of calcium supplement that can be taken with or without food.
- Don't take all of your calcium supplements at one time. Your body absorbs calcium best in amounts of 600 mg or less.
- Don't take supplements that come from unrefined oyster shell, bone meal or dolomite unless the label states "purified" or has the USP (United States Pharmacopeia) symbol.

Why Is Vitamin D Important?

Your body needs vitamin D to absorb calcium. You can get small amounts of vitamin D from a few foods, including liver, egg yolks and fatty fish like mackerel, salmon and tuna. Vitamin D is also added to milk and some other foods. You can read the food label to see if vitamin D has been added to a specific food.

Your skin can make vitamin D from the sun, but getting too much sun can be harmful. It's important to wear sunscreen or sunblock to protect your skin, but these products also prevent your skin from making vitamin D from the sun.

To get enough vitamin D, many people need to take a supplement. To find out if you're getting enough of the vitamin, you can ask your doctor or other healthcare provider for a blood test to check your vitamin D level.

Osteoporosis

What You Need to Know



How Can I Find Out If I Have Healthy Bones?

You can find out if you have osteoporosis or if you are at risk for the disease by getting a bone mineral density (BMD) test.

The National Osteoporosis Foundation (NOF) recommends a BMD test of the hip and spine by a central DXA machine to diagnose osteoporosis. DXA stands for dual energy x-ray absorptiometry.

Talk to your doctor or other healthcare provider about whether you should have a BMD test. If you are a woman and have reached menopause or a man age 50 or older, you should learn about your risk factors for osteoporosis. If you have risk factors, you may need a BMD test. If you are a woman age 65 or older or a man age 70 or older and have never had a BMD test, you should have one. Medicare insurance will pay for a test every two years.

Which Exercises Are Best for My Bones?

Like your muscles, your bones get stronger when you make them work. Weight-bearing and resistance exercises are important for building bones and keeping them strong.

- Weight-bearing exercises make you work against gravity while standing. They are called weight-bearing exercises because when you do them, your bones support the weight of your body. Some examples are dancing, hiking, jogging, elliptical training machines, aerobics and walking.
- Muscle-strengthening exercises are activities where you move your body, a weight or some other resistance against gravity. Examples are lifting weights, using elastic exercise bands, lifting your own body weight or using weight machines.

Check with your healthcare provider before beginning a new exercise program. This is important if you have heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, problems with balance or another medical condition. Your doctor or other healthcare provider may also refer you to a physical therapist who can teach you exercises that are safe and healthy for your bones.

What Can I Do If I Have Osteoporosis?

There is no cure for osteoporosis. While the disease is not curable, it can be treated. You can help keep your bones strong by exercising, getting enough calcium and vitamin D and not smoking. These are important lifelong habits, but it's never too early (or too late!) to start.

If you have osteoporosis or are at risk for the disease, ask your doctor or other healthcare provider if an osteoporosis medicine is right for you. Many osteoporosis medicines are now available to help treat osteoporosis and prevent broken bones.

How Can I Prevent Falls?

One way you can prevent broken bones is by preventing falls. To prevent falls:

- Exercise to keep your muscles strong and improve your balance.
- Wear supportive shoes with rubber soles and low heels. Don't walk in socks or slip-on slippers.
- Ask your doctor, healthcare provider or pharmacist if any of your medicines could make you feel dizzy.
- Keep your floors free of clutter. Remove loose wires, cords and throw rugs.
- Keep halls, stairs and entry ways well lit. Use night lights in the bedroom and bathroom.
- Use grab bars and a nonskid rubber mat in the shower or bathtub.
- Have your vision and hearing checked often.

How Can I Protect My Spine?

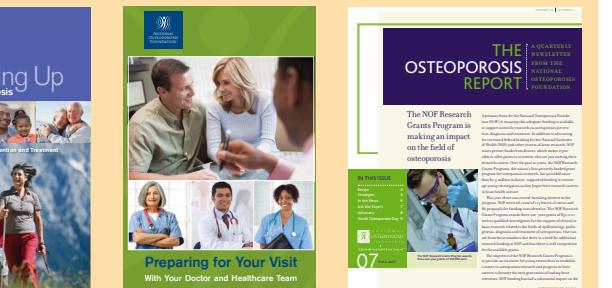
You can help prevent broken bones in your spine by NOT:

- Having a slumped, head-forward posture.
- Bending forward from the waist.
- Twisting the spine to a point of strain.
- Twisting the trunk and bending forward when doing activities such as sneezing, vacuuming or lifting.

Learn More. Become an NOF Member!

To learn more about taking care of your bones and preventing or treating osteoporosis, consider becoming a member of NOF. As a member, you will get:

- *Boning Up on Osteoporosis*, NOF's 100-page user manual for your bones.
- *Preparing for Your Visit With Your Doctor and Healthcare Team*.
- *The Osteoporosis Report*, NOF's quarterly newsletter.
- A 10 percent discount on publications and gifts purchased from NOF's store at www.nofstore.org.
- A list of NOF publications and gifts available free of charge or with a 10 percent discount.



To Become an NOF Member:

- Visit: www.nof.org
- E-mail: membership@nof.org
- Call toll-free: 1 (800) 231-4222

To receive free educational information about bone health, contact NOF. If you already have low bone density or osteoporosis, ask about NOF's free programs of support.