

May

Health Activities and Observances

National Osteoporosis Prevention Month
National Arthritis Month
National Digestive Diseases
Awareness Month
National High Blood Pressure
Education Month
National Stroke Awareness Month
National Teen Pregnancy Prevention
Month
National Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection
and Prevention Month
Mental Health Month
Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month
Better Hearing and Speech Month
Hepatitis Awareness Month
National Women's Health Week (9-15)
World Asthma Day (5)

*When it comes to your
health, even little steps can
make a big difference.*

-President Bush



May

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May

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May

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Wellness starts with... Healthy Bones



A woman's bones need to stay strong as she grows older. Unfortunately, millions of women are at risk for osteoporosis, a condition when your bones weaken and your risk of fracture increases. Osteoporosis strikes at any age, and because there are no symptoms, you might not know you have it until you break a bone!



A fracture caused by osteoporosis can have devastating effects on a woman's quality of life—causing disability, chronic pain, or loss of independence. But preventing weak bones is easy. Get enough calcium now and throughout your lifetime. Do weight-bearing physical activity, which is any activity in which your body works against gravity, like walking or dancing. No matter how old you are, it is never too late to start!

Risk Factors for Osteoporosis

Bone strength is affected by many factors, which may raise your risk of getting osteoporosis:

- being female
- a small body frame
- being thin
- family history of osteoporosis
- postmenopausal status or advanced age
- not having enough estrogen because of menopause
- Caucasian or Asian race (however, women of all races are at risk)
- absence of menstrual periods
- anorexia nervosa (eating disorder when a person becomes dangerously thin)
- diet low in calcium and vitamin D
- inactive lifestyle
- long-term use of glucocorticoids (medications prescribed for many diseases like arthritis, asthma, and lupus), anti-seizure medications, gonadotropin-releasing hormone, excessive use of aluminum-containing antacids, certain cancer treatments, and excessive thyroid hormone
- current cigarette smoking
- excessive use of alcohol
- long-term bed rest, not being able to move (for example, if your leg is paralyzed from a stroke), or being physically disabled

Bone Health and Breastfeeding Mothers

Although breastfeeding mothers' bones may lose a small amount of calcium during lactation or breastfeeding, calcium is restored within six months after weaning. And research shows that breastfeeding may actually offer some protection against osteoporosis. Studies show that post-menopausal women who breastfed for long periods of time have the same or higher bone density than women who never breastfed. They may also have a lower risk of hip fracture.

Although breastfeeding may be good for a mother's bone health, exclusively breastfed infants may not get enough vitamin D. Vitamin D helps your baby build strong bones, and, without enough vitamin D, babies can get rickets, a disease that causes their bones to soften. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends giving your baby 200 IU (stands for international units and used to measure vitamins) of vitamin D, once a day, every day. Talk to your health care provider about your baby's need for vitamin D.

Preventive Screening for Osteoporosis

You can have tests done to measure your bone density at different places in your body. These tests can find osteoporosis before you fracture a bone, predict your chances of fracturing a bone in the future, figure out your rate of bone loss, and determine if treatments are working.

Women with risk factors, who are 65 and older, or women 60 to 64 who are at an increased risk for fractures (weigh less than 154 pounds and don't take estrogen) from osteoporosis, should be screened routinely for osteoporosis. Dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry (DEXA) is the most accurate test for measuring bone density. Other tests, such as ultrasound or peripheral measurement devices, can also help in the diagnosis of osteoporosis.



You need enough calcium and vitamin D each day for strong bones throughout life. Try to follow these recommendations.

Calcium

Ages	mg per day
9-18	1300
19-50	1000
51 and older	1200

Pregnant or Nursing, Ages:

18 and younger	1300
19-50	1000

Vitamin D

Ages	IU per day
19-50	200
51-70	400
71 and older	600

Steps You Can Take for Healthy Bones

Osteoporosis is not a normal part of aging. Building strong bones during childhood and adolescence is the best defense against getting osteoporosis later. Even as you get older, you can stop your bones from becoming weak, brittle, and more likely to break.

- **Get enough calcium.** You can get calcium through foods and calcium pills. Dairy products are a good source of calcium and should be nonfat or low-fat. Use 1 percent or skim milk instead of whole milk or cream, and choose from lower fat or fat-free cheeses, yogurt, and frozen yogurt. Nonfat and low-fat milk have the same amount of calcium. Besides dairy products, include other high-calcium foods in your diet, such as tofu (only if made with calcium sulfate), calcium-fortified juices, and dark green leafy vegetables, like broccoli and collards. Talk with your health care provider before taking calcium pills to see which kind is best for you.
- **Get enough vitamin D.** It's also important to get enough vitamin D, which helps your body absorb calcium. You can get it through exposure to sunlight and certain foods (such as milk, eggs, salmon, and yogurt). If you have limited sun exposure, be sure to add foods with vitamin D to your diet.
- **Be physically active.** An active lifestyle can help decrease the risk of fractures by slowing bone loss, increasing muscle strength, and improving balance. Aim to do weight-bearing physical activities, like walking, running, dancing, climbing stairs, or using weights in a gym.
- **Don't smoke.** People who smoke have a higher chance of getting osteoporosis.
- **Drink alcohol moderately (no more than one drink per day for women).** Alcohol can hurt the cells that build your bones. It also lowers the amount of calcium in your body.
- **Prevent falls.** Reduce your risk of falling by making your home safer. For example, use a rubber bath mat in the shower or tub. Keep your floors free from clutter.
- **Get a bone density test.** Talk with your health care provider because these tests will tell you about your current bone health and risk for fracture in the future.
- **Consider taking medications that prevent or treat bone loss.** Talk with your health care provider about the risks and benefits of these medications: alendronate (Fosamax®), risedronate (Actonel®), calcitonin (Miacalcin®), raloxifene (Evista®), and teriparatide (Fortéo®). Teriparatide is the first medication to increase bone formation. Estrogen therapy (ET) or hormone therapy (HT) also reduce bone loss and increase bone density, but new studies show these therapies may not be a good option for many women because they increase risk for heart disease, stroke, blood clots, and breast cancer.
- **Start early.** Making good choices for healthy bones, like getting enough calcium and exercise, should start in childhood and become habits that last. Help your daughter build healthy bones. Programs like *Powerful Bones. Powerful Girls.*™ (www.cdc.gov/powerfulbones) teach girls how to build strong bones.

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Lactose Intolerance

If you are lactose intolerant, you know it can be a challenge to get enough calcium. Lactose intolerance means the body is not able to easily digest foods that contain lactose, or the natural sugar that is found in dairy products. Gas, bloating, stomach cramps, diarrhea, and nausea are symptoms you might have.

Lactose-reduced and lactose-free products are sold in grocery stores. There's a great variety, including lactose-free milk, cheese, and ice cream. You also can take special tablets or liquids prior to eating to help you better digest dairy products.

You can also reach your calcium requirements by eating foods fortified with calcium, like certain cereals and orange juice, and by taking calcium supplements. Because there are several types of calcium supplements available, you should discuss them first with your health care provider. Please note: If you have symptoms of lactose intolerance, talk to your health care provider, because these symptoms also could be a sign of a different, or more serious, illness. Also, some people have lactose maldigestion, or are sensitive to lactose, but can digest small amounts of dairy products without having symptoms.

Foods with Calcium

Here are some foods to help you get the calcium you need. Check the food labels for more information.

Food	Portion	Calcium (milligrams)	% Daily Value
Plain, fat-free (or low-fat) yogurt	1 cup	450	45
American cheese	2 ounces	348	35
Milk (fat-free or low-fat)	1 cup	300	30
Orange juice with added calcium	1 cup	300	30
Broccoli, cooked or fresh	1 cup	90	10

For more information on healthy bones, check out these resources:

National Bone Health Campaign

Internet: www.cdc.gov/powerfulbones
Phone: 888-CDC-4674

National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases

Internet: www.niams.nih.gov
Phone: 877-226-4267

NIH Osteoporosis and Related Bone Diseases National Resource Center

Internet: www.osteoo.org
Phone: 800-624-BONE

National Osteoporosis Foundation

Internet: www.nof.org
Phone: 800-223-9994

Publications:

Osteoporosis: The Bone Thief

Internet: www.nia.nih.gov/health/agepages/osteoo.htm

Osteoporosis: Are You at Risk?

Internet: www.fda.gov/womens/osteobrochure/default.htm