

ADULT HEALTH BULLETIN



MAY 2019

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: HEALTHY BONES



Osteoporosis is a serious condition that we often ignore until it is too late. The disease is characterized by low bone mass and decline of bone tissue, which can lead to broken bones. According to the National Osteoporosis Foundation, 10.2 million American adults have osteoporosis and another 43.3 million have low bone mass. In fact, one in three women and one in five men older than the age of 50 will experience an osteoporotic fracture.

Fortunately, there is a lot you can do to prevent osteoporosis and to strengthen and improve the health of your bones:

- Eat a well-balanced nutritious diet, including fruits and vegetables.
- Get plenty of calcium and vitamin D.
- Participate in regular exercise and weight-bearing activity.
- Avoid smoking and second-hand smoke.
- Limit alcohol and heavy drinking.

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Exercise regularly — if possible, 150 minutes a week or more.

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Eat a well-balanced nutritious diet

Eat foods that are good for bone health. This starts with eating a well-balanced nutritious diet. You can start by increasing your fruit and vegetable intake, which are great sources of calcium and vitamin D.

Eating calcium-rich food, like leafy greens and dairy products, is the best way to get calcium, or you can take calcium supplements if your health-care provider recommends them. Vitamin D is important for protecting bones, and your body needs vitamin D to absorb calcium. You can get vitamin D by getting enough sunlight and eating vitamin D-rich foods, like salmon, tuna, and other fatty fish.

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Participate in regular exercise

Exercise regularly — if possible, 150 minutes a week or more. Weight-bearing exercises like dancing, hiking, walking, or low-impact aerobics help build bones and keep them strong. Muscle-strengthening exercises like lifting weights, yoga, and Pilates can help improve not only your bone strength, but your balance and flexibility as well, which is important for fall prevention.

Stop smoking

Smoking has been identified as a risk factor for osteoporosis. Some studies have shown a relationship between tobacco use and decreased bone density. You should also limit your alcohol intake to no more than two to three drinks a day, because drinking heavily can also lead to bone loss.

Talk to your primary care provider about your risk of osteoporosis and ask whether you need to have a bone density test. Bone density tests are recommended for several categories of patients:

- Women age 65 years and older
- Postmenopausal women younger than 65 years with risk factors
- Men 70 years or older
- Men younger than 70 years with risk factors
- Adults with a fragility fracture
- Adults with a condition, disease, or medication associated with low bone density or bone loss

SOURCES

- <https://www.nof.org/preventing-fractures/prevention>
- <https://www.piedmont.org/living-better/5-ways-to-prevent-osteoporosis>
- <http://www.iofbonehealth.org/preventing-osteoporosis>

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