

Fact:

You can prevent bone loss — even when you're older

Medicine is one way to prevent bone loss. Here are some other ways you can protect yourself from bone loss and fractures.

- * Eat calcium-rich foods: milk and other dairy products; dark green, leafy vegetables such as broccoli; canned sardines; tofu; almonds
- * If you smoke, stop.
- * Limit the amount of alcohol and beverages with caffeine you're drinking.
- * Exercise regularly. Exercises that keep you on your feet (walking and dancing) or exercises that strengthen your muscles (lifting weights) are the best.



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Know the **facts**
to keep your
bones healthy



Fact: Bones weaken with age

Bones can weaken with age. The condition is called **osteoporosis**.

Osteoporosis is a serious, if silent, disease. About **10 million** Americans suffer from osteoporosis. Another **34 million** are at risk for the disease and for fractures.

But osteoporosis — and breaks or fractures — don't have to be facts of life.

Fact: Some people are more at risk for osteoporosis than others

Everyone gets older. Not everyone gets osteoporosis. Women are more vulnerable than men. Your physician can tell you whether you are at risk for osteoporosis and if tests are needed to determine your bone mass density.

Some factors that can speed up bone loss and increase your chances of getting osteoporosis include:

- * Being a female
- * Being Caucasian (white) or Asian
- * Not having menstrual periods any more
- * Having someone in your family with osteoporosis
- * Not getting any exercise
- * Smoking cigarettes.
- * Drinking alcohol or beverages with caffeine, such as coffee, tea or cola drinks
- * Not eating enough foods with calcium

Fact: You can treat, and even reverse, osteoporosis

There are medications that can stop bone loss. Regular exercise will help each of them work better.

Bisphosphonates — This group of drugs improves bone density and therefore bone strength. Some brand names are Fosamax® (available as a generic), Actonel®, Boniva® and Reclast®.

Miacalcin® and Fortical® — This is a naturally occurring hormone. Miacalcin and Fortical are two synthetic forms of calcitonin that help slow bone loss and increase spinal bone density.

Selective estrogen receptor modulators — These offer the helpful effects of estrogen therapy without the potential disadvantages. Raloxifene (Evista®), for example, increases bone mass and reduces the risk of spine fractures.

Parathyroid hormones — An FDA-approved, man-made hormone, Forteo® increases bone density and bone strength.

No matter which treatment you use, make sure that you also include in your diet each day 1200 mg of calcium and 800 to 1,000 units of Vitamin D. Vitamin D is available in multiple vitamins, some calcium supplements and fortified milk.

Fact: The numbers tell the story

One out of every two women and one out of every four men over the age of **50** will have a bone fracture related to osteoporosis. A woman's risk of fracturing her hip is the same as her risk for breast cancer, uterine cancer and ovarian cancer combined.

Fact: Take your medicine as directed

- * Most bisphosphonates are taken weekly or monthly. It's important to stay upright after you take a bisphosphonate because it helps the drug circulate quicker and reduces the chance of irritation to your esophagus.
- * Reclast, a bisphosphonate, is given once a year as an intravenous injection in a clinic or hospital setting. It's used for people who can't tolerate oral drugs.
- * Miacalcin and Fortical are generally given as nasal sprays. The usual dose is one spray into one nostril once a day.
- * Evista is taken orally once a day.
- * Forteo is given daily as an injection under the skin of the thigh or stomach.

