

Men and Osteoporosis: Get the Facts

Facts:

Osteoporosis is a major public health threat. Although women have a greater risk for getting osteoporosis, men get it too. The good news is that osteoporosis is easy to diagnose and it is treatable. Here are some facts:

- One in four men will experience a broken bone after 50.
- The most common bone breaks are in the spine, wrist, and hip.
- In the year after breaking a hip, men have a greater risk of dying due to complications than women do.
- All men should discuss bone health with their health care providers.

What is osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis is a disease that causes bones to become thin, weak, and easier to break. It is often called a "silent disease." You can't feel or see your bones getting thinner. You may not even know that you have thin bones until a bone breaks. A broken bone can interfere with your daily activities and it can have serious consequences.

Risk factors:

It is important for you to identify your personal risks for osteoporosis and discuss them with your health care provider. Knowing your risk factors is the first step in taking an active role in the prevention, early diagnosis, and treatment of osteoporosis.

Listed below are some of the *risk factors* for osteoporosis. The more risk factors you have, the greater your risk for osteoporosis.

- I am a man older than 70.
- I am White or Asian.
- A close relative has osteoporosis or has broken a bone.
- I had broken a bone after 50.
- I have lost more than 1½ inches of height or have stooped posture.
- I am small and thin.
- I rarely exercise.
- I rarely get enough calcium.
- I smoke.
- I have more than two drinks of alcohol several times a week.
- I take steroid medications.
- I have rheumatoid arthritis.
- I have low hormone levels.
- I have prostate cancer and take a medication such as Zolodex™ or Lupron™, that lowers my hormone levels.

What can I do to prevent osteoporosis and broken bones?

- **Eat a variety of healthy (nutrient-rich) foods every day.** Eat several servings of fruits and vegetables each day. The average person should eat 4 1/2 cups of fruits and vegetables every day.
- **Get the calcium you need.** It is best to get calcium from the foods you eat. Foods rich in calcium include low-fat dairy foods (milk, yogurt, cheese), dark green, leafy vegetables (bok choy, broccoli, collard greens, kale, and turnip greens), canned fish (sardines, salmon) eaten with bones, and calcium-fortified foods. Try to eat a calcium-rich food at each meal. If you cannot get the calcium you need from food alone, speak to your health care provider about whether a calcium supplement is right for you. You need to consume only 1,000-1,200 mg a day from food and supplements combined.
- **Get the recommended amount of vitamin D.** There are only a few good natural sources of vitamin D, including fatty fish such as salmon, sardines, and tuna. Small amounts of vitamin D are added to all milk and some types of soy milk, rice milk, almond milk, yogurt, cheese, juice, and nutrition bars. You may need a vitamin D supplement to get enough vitamin D. Everyone needs at least 600 to 800 IU, but your health care provider may recommend more for you.
- **Be physically active.** Your bones get stronger and denser when you make them work. Walking, climbing stairs, and dancing are impact (or weight-bearing) exercises that strengthen your bones by moving your body against gravity when you are upright. Resistance exercises such as lifting weights or using exercise bands strengthen your bones and your muscles, too! Tai Chi is an example of physical activity that improves posture and balance to help decrease your risk for falls and fractures. Exercise can be easy; try 10 minutes at a time, adding up the minutes to reach your goal.
- **Don't smoke.** If you do, stop! Call 1-866-NY-QUITS for information about how to quit.
- **Limit alcohol.** Before drinking alcohol, it is important to speak to your health care provider about possible interactions with your medication or your medical condition. Too much alcohol can be bad for your bones and your overall health.
- **Take action to prevent falls.** Most broken bones occur as a result of a fall that could have been prevented. Some actions to prevent falls at home include using nightlights, removing or securing scatter rugs, and getting rid of clutter.
- **Get a Bone Mineral Density Test when indicated.** Speak to your health care provider to find out when you should get a BMD.