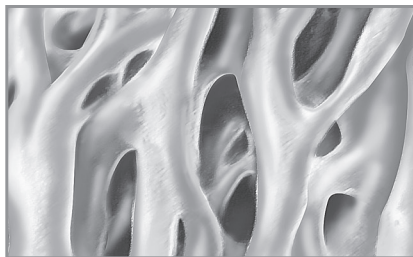
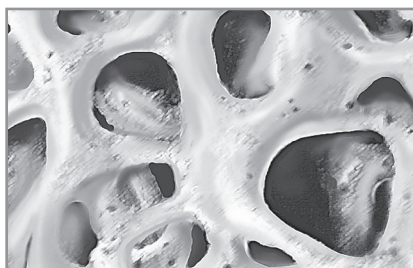


# Osteoporosis



Healthy bone



Bone with osteoporosis

## Know Your Risk

Osteoporosis is called a silent disease because it develops without any symptoms. You can help prevent osteoporosis by knowing if you're at risk. You're more likely to have osteoporosis if:

- **you're female**
- **you have a small, thin frame**
- **you're Caucasian or Asian**
- **you're post-menopausal**
- **you smoke or drink a lot of alcohol regularly** (more than one drink a day for women or two drinks a day for men)
- **you don't exercise**
- **you don't get enough calcium and vitamin D**

Talk to your doctor about your risk, and ask about scheduling a bone mineral density test. You can also learn more about your risk for osteoporosis at [HealthyAdvice.com/OsteoporosisRisk](https://www.healthyadvice.com/osteoporosisrisk).

**Osteoporosis weakens your bones, which causes them to break or fracture easily.** During your life, your body replaces old bone with new bone. But as you get older, bone loss speeds up, and you begin losing bone more quickly than new bone can form. From then on, this makes your bones thinner and less dense.

There's no cure for osteoporosis, but it can be prevented and treated. It's never too late to strengthen your bones. Work with your doctor to make a prevention or treatment plan, so you can live a healthy, active life for years to come.

## Bone Mineral Density Test

If you're a woman over age 65 or a man over age 70, you need a bone mineral density test. Your doctor may recommend you begin screening sooner if you're at risk for osteoporosis. How often you'll need the test depends on the results of your first test.

The bone mineral density test is a quick and painless X-ray. It compares your bone density to that of a 30-year-old healthy adult. This is the age when you have the most bone built up in your body.

The result of your bone mineral density test is called a T-score. It tells you if your bone density is above or below normal (*see chart below*).

Your doctor will use the results of your bone mineral density test to decide if and what type of treatment you need.

T-SCORE	RISK
+1 to -1	normal
-1 to -2.5	low bone density, called <b>osteopenia</b>
-2.5 or lower	osteoporosis

## Treatment

If you have osteoporosis or osteopenia, your doctor may recommend treatment. Medicines can help slow bone loss and build new bone. They can also help prevent fractures. Even if you take medicine for osteoporosis, it's still important to keep getting the recommended amounts of calcium and vitamin D (*see other side*). Your doctor may also ask you to make changes to your eating plan or exercise routine.

(continued on other side)



## Prevent Falls

To help protect yourself from falls:

- Practice exercises that improve your coordination and balance, such as yoga.
- Have your vision checked.
- Use a cane or walker if you feel unstable.
- Wear shoes with thin, nonslip soles.
- Put nonslip mats in your shower and bathtub.
- Use double-sided tape on rugs so they don't slide.
- Keep your home well-lit, especially along staircases.

## What You Can Do

In addition to medicine, there are many things you can do to slow bone loss and prevent osteoporosis:

- **Get calcium and vitamin D**—Make sure you're getting the recommended amounts of calcium and vitamin D every day. Adults over 50 need at least 1,200 mg of calcium and 400-600 IU of vitamin D a day. To meet your calcium needs, choose low-fat dairy products, vegetables like broccoli and kale, and calcium-fortified juices and cereals. To get your daily vitamin D, eat fatty fish like salmon and look for vitamin D-fortified foods like milk and cereal.

Check the nutrition labels on the foods you eat so you can keep track of how much calcium and vitamin D you're getting. If you don't get enough from food, ask your doctor about taking a supplement.

- **Stay active**—Exercise can help slow bone loss and keep your bones strong. Aim to do weight-bearing exercise three or more times a week. This includes activities like walking, playing tennis or dancing. If you have osteoporosis, avoid high-impact exercise like running that puts too much strain on your bones.
- **Don't smoke**—Smoking increases your risk of osteoporosis and weakens your bones. Ask your doctor about nicotine replacement therapy, like the nicotine patch or gum. Also, visit [www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov) for a free, no-pressure resource with tools to help you quit for good.
- **Limit your alcohol intake**—Heavy drinking over a long period of time increases your risk of osteoporosis. Don't have more than one drink a day for women or two drinks a day for men.



To learn more, visit

**HealthyAdvice.com/  
Calcium**

You can also visit these websites:

- **MedlinePlus**  
[www.medlineplus.gov](http://www.medlineplus.gov)
- **National Osteoporosis Foundation**  
[www.nof.org](http://www.nof.org)

## Remember:

- If you're at risk for osteoporosis, talk to your doctor about ways to prevent or delay bone loss.
- Get a bone mineral density test if you're a woman over age 65 or if you're a man over age 70.
- Make sure you're getting enough calcium and vitamin D every day.
- Take steps to prevent falls.

This *Healthy Advice* handout may be reproduced for patient use and is provided courtesy of your doctor:

