

Bone Up on Osteoporosis Facts

Osteoporosis causes bones to become weak and brittle. You cannot feel or see your bones getting thinner. Although you can break a bone in any part of your body, the most common broken bones associated with osteoporosis are the spine, wrist and hip.

- One of every two women and one of every four men will be affected by osteoporosis in their lifetime.
- One half of all women older than age 50 have osteoporosis or low bone mass and most do not know it.
- Osteoporosis-related fractures are a major cause of illness and disability for elders. Early diagnosis and treatment may prevent many of these fractures.
- Of those who fracture a hip, 20 percent to 25 percent will die within a year, with men who break their hips dying at a higher rate than women.

KNOW YOUR RISK FACTORS. Listed below are some of the risk factors for osteoporosis. The more risk factors you check, the greater your risk for osteoporosis. (This is not a complete list. Ask your physician!)

- I am a woman older than 65 or a man older than 70.
- I am underweight for my height.
- I have reached menopause.
- A close relative has osteoporosis or has broken a bone.
- I have broken a bone after age 50.
- I have lost more than 1 ½ inches of height or have stooped posture.
- 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.

GOOD NEWS! Osteoporosis is largely preventable for most people.

Healthy behaviors include a balanced diet rich in calcium and vitamin D, weight-bearing exercise, without smoking or excessive alcohol, and bone density testing and medications when appropriate.

You can also contact the National Osteoporosis Foundation at: <http://www.nof.org/>