

# Osteoporosis – Frequently Asked Questions

## What is osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis is a “thinning” of the bones. As bones become thinner they become more fragile and can break easily.

## How common is osteoporosis?

It is most common in older women. In the U.S., nearly 10 million people have osteoporosis, including more than 2 million men. An additional 18 million people have “low bone density.” This puts them at risk for additional bone loss and bone fractures.

## How do I know if I have osteoporosis?

Often, you may not know until you fracture a bone. The first sign that you have osteoporosis could be a decrease in your height.

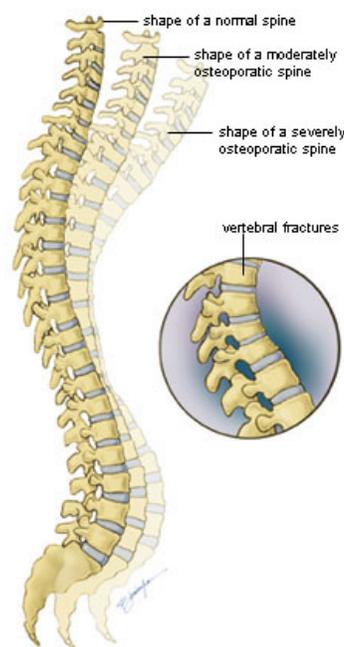
## What can put me at risk for osteoporosis?

- Increased age
- A parent who had a hip fracture
- Low body weight or body mass index (BMI)
- Certain medications
- Smoking
- Drinking alcohol

## How can I be screened for osteoporosis?

Women 65 and older should be screened for osteoporosis. Screening for women at a higher risk should start at age 60.

A bone density test called a DEXA scan measures bone health. It is used for screening and diagnosis of osteoporosis.



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## Can osteoporosis be prevented?

The best prevention for osteoporosis is to build strong bones during your lifetime. Ways to do this include:

- Eat a healthy and balanced diet.
- Get enough calcium from your diet or from calcium supplements.
  - Good sources of calcium include milk, leafy green vegetables, soybeans, yogurt, cheese, and fortified orange juice.
- Get enough Vitamin D from sunlight or foods like milk.
- Include weight-bearing activities in your lifestyle. Walking and dancing are good weight-bearing activities and can help to slow bone loss.
- Stop smoking.
- Limit the amount of alcohol you drink.

## Are there treatments for osteoporosis?

The main goal of treatment is to prevent a fracture.

Eating a balanced and healthy diet that includes enough calcium and vitamin D will help keep bones strong.

Participating in weight-bearing activities will also help.

Your provider may prescribe medications to slow bone loss and increase bone strength.

Making simple changes in your home can help prevent a fall, which may result in a fracture.

- Rooms and hallways should be free of clutter.
- Keep rooms and hallways well lit.
- Use night lights.
- Wear rubber-soled shoes for traction.
- Remove or anchor area rugs.
- Consider installing “grab” bars in the bathroom.

**Talk with your Health Care Team if you have specific questions or concerns.**

