

WHAT IS...?

Bone mass: It is the amount of bone that the skeleton contains in a definite moment. It depends on age, sex and race.

Bone density test: It is a test that measures bone density compared to a standard. It is very helpful to diagnose osteoporosis. You can have a *bone density test* to find out how solid your bones are.



CALCIUM IN DIET

Food rich in calcium includes **milk and dairy products (cheese, yoghurt,...)**.

Other food containing calcium includes:

Almonds, Corn, Cabbage, Broccoli, Orange, Sardines



CAN I AVOID FALLING?

When your bones are weak, a simple fall can cause a broken bone. This can mean a trip to the hospital and maybe surgery. It might also mean being laid up for a long time, especially in the case of a hip fracture. So, it is important to prevent falls. Some things you can do are:

Make sure you can see and hear well. Use your glasses or a hearing aid if needed.

Ask your doctor if any of the drugs you are taking can make you dizzy or unsteady on your feet.

Use a cane or walker if your walking is unsteady.

Wear rubber-soled and low-heeled shoes.

Make sure all the rugs and carpeting in your house are firmly attached to the floor, or don't use them.

Keep your rooms well lit and the floor free of clutter.

Use nightlights.

IS THERE A TREATMENT FOR OSTEOPOROSIS?

Treating osteoporosis means stopping the bone loss and rebuilding bone to prevent breaks. Diet and exercise can help make your bones stronger. But they may not be enough if you have lost a lot of bone density. There are also several medicines to think about. Some will slow your bone loss, and others can help rebuild bone. Talk with your doctor to see if one of these might work for you:

Bisphosphonates

Raloxifene.

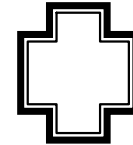
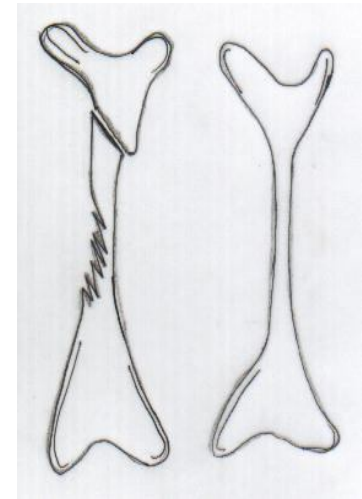
Estrogen. (in menopause)

Calcitonin.

REMEMBER THAT TREATMENT IS IMPORTANT TO PREVENT THE RISK OF BONE FRACTURE

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OSTEOPOROSIS



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WHAT IS OSTEOPOROSIS?

Osteoporosis is a disease that weakens bones to the point where they break easily—most often bones in the hip, backbone (spine), and wrist.

The amount of bone (bone mass) gradually increases since birth until it reaches a maximum value around the age of 30-35. This is called **peak bone mass** (the maximum bone mass achieved by midlife). After peak bone mass is reached, bone mass starts to decline slowly due to natural bone loss throughout our lives.

CAN WE PREVENT OSTEOPOROSIS?

Yes. It is always possible to adopt measures to reduce the risk of osteoporosis.

It is never too late to take action even if you have had your menopause several years ago or your doctor has told you that you already have osteoporosis.

Adequate diet

The first step consists in adopting all possible measures to achieve the maximum bone mass by midlife (30-35 years old). This is why it is so important to take enough calcium during puberty and youth.

From 30-35 yrs onwards bone growth stops but it is important to take an appropriate amount of calcium at all ages:

AGE	RECOMMENDED DAILY CALCIUM INTAKES IN MG
Young adults • 11-24 yrs	1200 -1500
Men: • 25-65 yrs • Older than 65 yrs	1000 1500
Women: • between 25-50 yrs • pregnant • lactating • older than 50 yrs (menopause) • older than 65 yrs	1000 1200 1500 1500 1500

Reduce alcohol intake.

Drinking heavily can reduce bone formation. In many cases, people who drink too much do not get enough calcium. Drinking may also affect your body's calcium supply. In addition, drinking too much is bad for your overall health and can make you more likely to fall. This is how many people break bones. Alcohol in smaller amounts, however, does not harm bone health. This usually means no more than two drinks a day.

Stop smoking. Smoking increases loss of bone mass. For this and many other health reasons, stop smoking. Limit how much alcohol you drink. Too much alcohol can put you at risk for falling and breaking a bone.

Exercise. Your bones and muscles will be stronger if you are physically active. Regular exercise (e.g.:walking 30-60 minutes) done three to four times a week, are best for preventing osteoporosis.

Vitamin D. Your body uses vitamin D to absorb calcium. Most people's bodies are able to make enough vitamin D if they are out in the sun for a total of 30 minutes every day. You can also get vitamin D from eggs, fatty fish, and cereal and milk fortified with vitamin D. If you think you are not getting enough vitamin D, check with your doctor.

RISK FACTORS OF OSTEOPOROSIS

As we get older our bones get thinner and weaker. According to this we all can suffer from osteoporosis theoretically. However, there are certain factors that can accelerate this process such as:

Menopause.

Women have a higher risk of developing osteoporosis than men. But it is important to remember that not all women will develop osteoporosis after their menopause. The risk will be higher if the loss of menstruation takes place at an early age (before 45 yrs). For most women, bone loss increases after menopause, when ovaries stop producing female hormones (**oestrogens**). These hormones are important to maintain bone structure and resistance.

Tobacco and alcohol.

Tobacco and high alcohol consumption can make our body less capable of maintaining a normal and healthy bone structure.

Lack of physical exercise.

Our bones need a certain amount of exercise to stay normal and healthy.

A diet poor in calcium.

Taking small amounts of calcium in our diet is not the best way to help our bones stay healthy. It is recommendable to eat food products that contain calcium (milk, cheese, yoghurt, sardines, salmon,...) to have a strong skeleton.

To have a background of osteoporosis in the family.