

WOMEN'S BONE HEALTH:

The Importance of Caring for Your Bones Early and Often

Why Should Women Care About Bone Health?

Beyond [allowing the body to move](#), bones serve the critical functions of protecting the body's organs from injury and [storing and releasing the body's supply of calcium](#). Yet, bone health isn't something that's top of mind for most people, especially early in life.

Taking proactive measures to support bone health early, especially while bones are still developing, can help build bone and reduce fracture risk later in life.

This is especially important for women, who are more prone to developing osteoporosis, the most common form of bone disease. Osteoporosis is characterized by low bone mass and the deterioration of bone tissue and is the major cause of fractures in postmenopausal women and in older men.

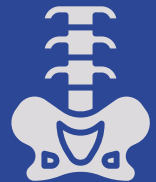
Osteoporotic fractures can lead to decreased mobility, physical function, independence, and quality of life – all of which can worsen with a subsequent fracture (initial fractures are associated with an [86% increased risk](#) of another fracture). They can also cause [post-traumatic stress disorder \(PTSD\), depression, and anxiety](#), and some fractures are associated with increased mortality; [one in three](#) adults ages 50 and older die within 12 months of suffering a hip fracture.

The Cost of Bone Health

Bone fractures are [costly](#), taking a toll on patients and their families.

\$44,311	Average annual health care costs among patients with fragility fractures
\$22 billion	Estimated national cost of osteoporosis and related fractures
>\$95 billion	Amount by which the national cost is expected to increase by 2040

Fast Facts: Women's Bone Health



- ▶ U.S. women have a **50%** lifetime risk of fracture starting at age 50
- ▶ Age and sex are the greatest risk factors for fractures
- ▶ For women, up to **90%** of peak bone mass is acquired by the age of 18
- ▶ **84%** of Americans are not tested or treated for osteoporosis
- ▶ Estimates suggest that a **10% increase in the peak bone mass of children and adolescents can reduce osteoporotic fracture risk in adulthood by 50%**



What Role Can Women Play in Achieving Optimal Bone Health?

Osteoporosis is not necessarily a natural consequence of aging, and in many cases, can be preventable.

Prevention is the greatest tool for improving and maintaining bone health. Adhering to a bone healthy lifestyle—and doing so early—is essential for mitigating the risk of osteoporosis.

Steps for Preserving and Maintaining Bone Health

Women can increase bone mineral density and prevent or slow bone loss across their lifespans by:

- ▶ Following healthy dietary habits, including eating foods rich in calcium and vitamin D
- ▶ Doing weight-bearing and resistance exercises, such as walking and jogging, weightlifting, and aerobic exercises, as well as muscle-strengthening physical activity and balance training
- ▶ Not smoking
- ▶ Limiting alcohol and caffeine consumption
- ▶ Knowing your risk of osteoporosis and fractures and getting bone density scans, when appropriate

Tips to Prevent Secondary Fractures

Women can help reduce their risk of secondary fractures by:

- ▶ Engaging in osteoporosis therapy
- ▶ Taking medicines, such as bisphosphonates, as prescribed, after the initial fracture to increase bone mineral density
- ▶ Working with a physiatrist (a doctor who specializes in physical medicine and rehabilitation)
- ▶ Exercising caution with daily activities and keeping the floor clear of obstacles that could lead to tripping

Additional Resources

- ▶ [Bone Health and Osteoporosis Foundation Resource Library](#)
- ▶ [National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases](#)
- ▶ [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office on Women's Health](#)



Learn more about women's bone health and ways women can take charge of their health care in the 2022 *Journal of Women's Health* report, "Recommendations for Improving Women's Bone Health Throughout the Lifespan."