

# Osteoporosis and You

Often called the “silent disease,” osteoporosis is approaching epidemic proportions. Ten million Americans have osteoporosis, and an estimated 34 million (80% of them women) have low bone density, a strong risk factor for the disease. Men and women from all races and backgrounds can develop osteoporosis. Osteoporosis drains bones of mineral content, and although the disease often has no symptoms, it causes more than 1.5 million fractures each year.

Osteoporosis is caused by a loss of bone tissue. The inability of bones to absorb calcium in post-menopausal women is a result of the dramatic decrease in estrogen levels.

If you show signs such as stooped posture, fractures, or stress fractures, you should contact your physician for a bone mineral density test. Risk factors that may increase your risk for developing osteoporosis are:

- Family history of osteoporosis
- Decrease of estrogen production caused by menopause
- Hysterectomy without ongoing estrogen replacement
- Lack of regular exercise
- Smoking and second-hand smoke
- Calcium deficiency
- Excess alcohol consumption
- Taking corticosteroid medications or regular use of steroids
- Cushing’s Syndrome (which is abnormally high levels of natural steroids in the body)

There is no cure for osteoporosis, but exercise and diet are keys to prevention and may even reverse some bone mass loss. Here are some tips:

- Eat a calcium rich diet including dairy, broccoli, kale, blackstrap molasses, and dried beans
- Increase Vitamin D intake with liver, cod liver oil, egg yolks, fortified milk, and cereals
- Participate regularly in weight-bearing exercises such as walking
- Undergo annual bone density screenings to monitor bone loss
- Begin a strength training exercise program today!

**For more information on Osteoporosis, check out these organizations’ websites:**

- Foundation for Osteoporosis Research and Education (FORE), [www.fore.org](http://www.fore.org)
- International Council on Active Aging (ICAA), [www.icaa.cc](http://www.icaa.cc)
- International Osteoporosis Foundation (IOF), [www.osteofound.org](http://www.osteofound.org)
- NIH, Osteoporosis & Related Bone Diseases National Resource Ctr, [www.osteo.org](http://www.osteo.org)
- National Osteoporosis Foundation (NOF), [www.nof.org](http://www.nof.org)

And remember, it’s never too early or too late to get in shape with Body Sculpting™ or Geri-Fit® (for older adults). Our twice-a-week strength training exercise programs use a set of 2 to 5-pound hand-held weights. The strength training exercises that are performed use muscles throughout the entire body to increase strength, flexibility, balance and coordination.

FOR A LISTING OF OUR CURRENT OSTEOPOROSIS WORKSHOPS  
PLEASE CLICK ON [TODAY’S NEWS](#).