

OSTEOPOROSIS

What is osteoporosis?

When the bones of the body lose calcium, become weak, and break easily, it is called osteoporosis. Bones may become so weak that they break during everyday activities such as bending over or walking.

Bones are hard. How can they become weak?

The calcium in your bones is like money in the bank. Your body draws on this “calcium savings account” regularly to keep you healthy. At the same time, your body takes the calcium from your food and makes regular deposits in your bones. Through childhood and young adulthood there are more deposits than withdrawals. Your bones get thicker and harder. By the time you are 30 years old, your bones are as big and strong as they will ever be. After you turn 30, your body does not store calcium or build bone as easily. For some people, the calcium withdrawals begin to outnumber the deposits. Their bones start to dissolve. Over time, the inside of the bones may start to look like Swiss cheese.

Who gets osteoporosis?

More than 28 million people in the United States have some bone weakness. Most of the people with osteoporosis are women over the age of 40. You are more at risk of getting osteoporosis if you:

- Are white
- Are over age 65
- Are in poor health
- Have a family member with osteoporosis
- Are a smoker
- Are an alcoholic
- Do not get regular exercise
- Have never been a milk drinker or eaten many foods with calcium

How can I prevent osteoporosis?

You can't change your age, race, or family. But you can help prevent osteoporosis. Try to:

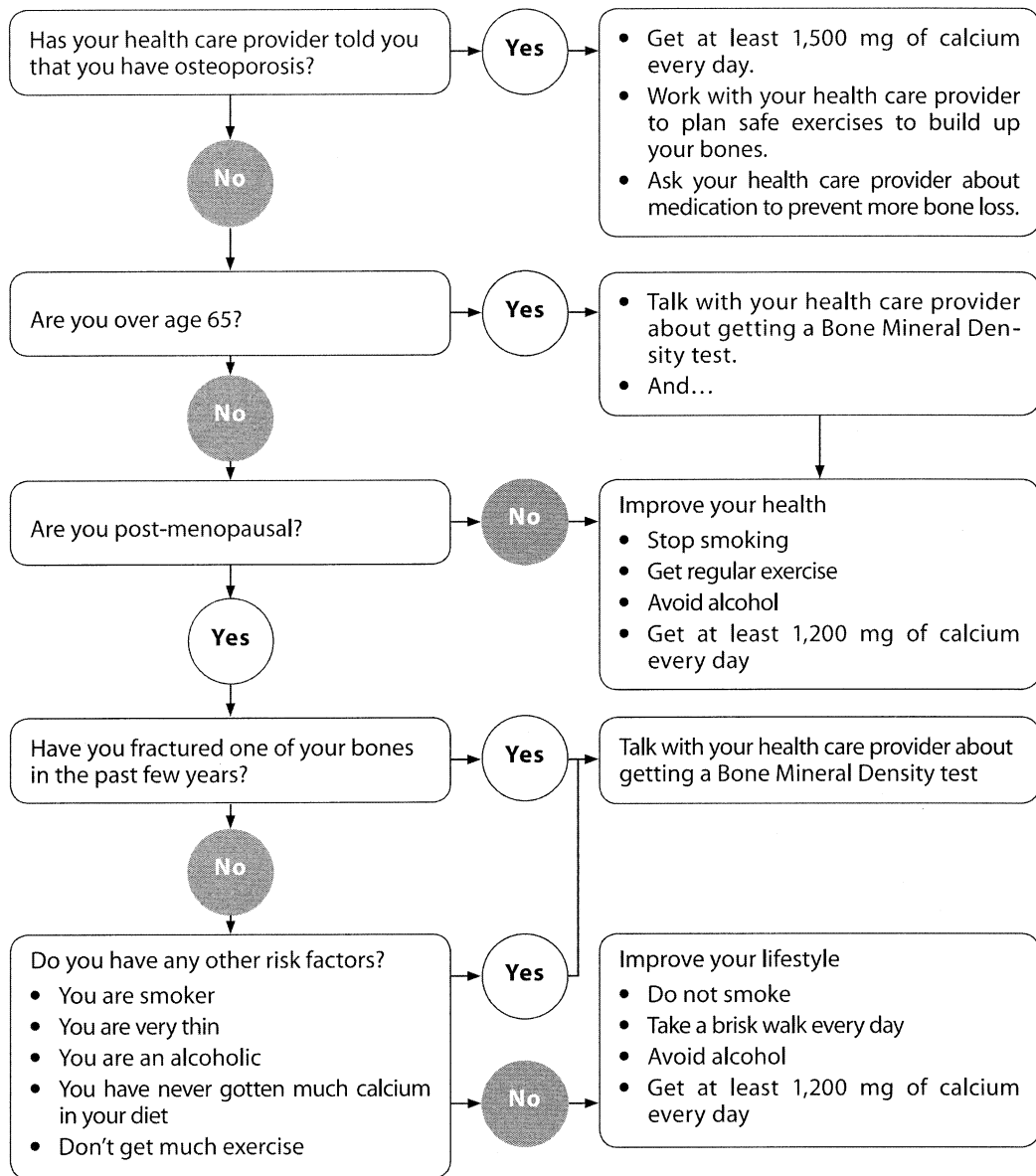
- Get regular exercise such as walking
- Stop smoking if you are a smoker
- Cut back on use of alcohol
- Get at least 1,200 mg of calcium every day

How can I get enough calcium?

Milk and milk products are the best source of calcium. Four cups of milk each day will give you 1,200 mg of calcium. Other good sources of calcium are sardines or canned salmon with the bones; cooked, dried beans; macaroni with cheese; or dark green leafy vegetables.

What Should I do About Osteoporosis?

What Should I Do About Osteoporosis?



For more information:

www.nof.org - National Osteoporosis Foundation

This site includes information on current research and medications as well as how to find a specialist.

www.laurushealth.com - Check out "Osteoporosis" in the Health Library

This site includes more in-depth information on the cause, prevention, and treatment of osteoporosis.

www.cdc.gov/powerfulbones/ - Centers for Disease Control "Powerful Bones, Powerful Girls"

This site has very good information about building strong bones for teen girls.

A great site for mothers who want to encourage their daughters to be strong and healthy.