



## Slowing the Onset of Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is being recognized as a common and serious disease especially with the aging population. Osteoporosis is a disease of the bones, causing them to become weak and break more easily. Many people are unaware they have Osteoporosis because they can't feel their bones becoming weaker

According to the National Osteoporosis Foundation, about 10 million Americans are already suffering with the disease, 80% which are women and about 34 million are also at risk. Estimates show that half of all women 50 and older will break a bone, and about one in four men will as well. Broken bones often lead to other health problems. Statistics show that 20% of seniors who break a hip die within one year from related problems or surgery, and many of those who survive need long-term nursing home care.

### Causes

Along with age and gender, certain factors can play a role in the onset of Osteoporosis:

- Your family history of Osteoporosis.
- Smoking cigarettes and/or drinking excessive alcohol, depleting the bones of minerals.
- Poor dietary habits and low levels of calcium and vitamin D.
- Lack of activity and strengthening exercise.
- Eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa.
- Medicines or medical conditions that cause bone loss.

### Warning Signs

Being over the age of 50, along with your past and current diet and lifestyle are sure clues as to your risk factor. Having back pain with no clear cause is also something to pay attention to. A visible sign is a decrease in posture and height, or becoming stooped and hunched can indicate a problem.

### Prevention

You can protect your bones and avoid your risk of developing Osteoporosis by avoiding:

1. Smoking cigarettes and/or drinking too much alcohol.
2. Eating a poor diet which lacks vitamins, minerals and protein.
3. Prolonged inactivity and a sedentary lifestyle.
4. Drugs or excessive medications.

Healthy habits to protect your bones include:

1. Eating a healthy diet with plenty of green vegetables that provide natural calcium, including taking mineral supplements such as calcium, magnesium and vitamin D.
2. Exercising and strength training, which builds supportive muscles around the joints and strengthens bones.
3. Maintaining a healthy weight to decrease the stress on joints.
4. Getting enough sunshine.
5. Learning safe movement habits, i.e. proper lifting, sitting, etc that protect the back and posture.
6. Getting regular check-ups with your doctor, especially after menopause.

Suffering from Osteoporosis does not have to be a normal part of aging. Start prevention early to lower your risk.