

## Osteoporosis

### **What is Osteoporosis?**

Osteoporosis (oss-tee-oh-puh-ro-sis) is a disease of the bones. People who have osteoporosis have bones that are weak and break easily.

A broken bone can really affect your life. It can cause severe pain and disability. It can make it harder to do daily tasks on your own, such as walking.

### **What Bones Does Osteoporosis Affect?**

Osteoporosis affects all bones in the body. However, breaks are most common in the hip, wrist, and spine, also called your vertebrae (vur-tuh-bray). Vertebrae support your body, helping you to stand and sit up.

Osteoporosis in the vertebrae can cause serious problems for women. A fracture in this area occurs from day-to-day activities like climbing stairs, lifting objects, or bending forward. Signs of osteoporosis:

- Sloping shoulders
- Curve in the back
- Height loss
- Back pain
- Hunched posture
- Protruding abdomen

### **What increases my chances of getting osteoporosis?**

There are several risk factors that raise your chances of developing osteoporosis. Some of the factors are things you can control, while some you can't control.

#### **Factors that you can't control:**

- Being female
- Getting older
- Menopause
- Small thin body (under 127 pounds)
- Family history of osteoporosis
- Caucasian or Asian race, although African American and Latinas are also at risk
- Not getting your period (if you should be getting it)
- Having a disorder that increases your risk of getting osteoporosis, (such as rheumatoid arthritis, type 1 diabetes, premature menopause, anorexia nervosa)
- Not getting enough exercise due to medical issues
- Long-term use of certain medications, including glucocorticoids (medicines prescribed for many diseases, including arthritis, asthma, and lupus) anti-seizure medications; gonadotropin releasing hormone for the treatment of endometriosis; aluminum-containing antacids; certain cancer treatments; and excessive thyroid hormone

**Factors that you can control:**

- Smoking
- Drinking too much alcohol. Experts recommend no more than 1 drink a day for women
- A diet low in dairy products or other sources of calcium and vitamin D
- Not getting enough exercise

To learn more about getting a bone density test, several ways to prevent weak bones, and treatment for osteoporosis, visit the [WomensHealth.gov website](https://www.womenshealth.gov)

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