

Bone health and osteoporosis

Broken bones can unfortunately be a consequence of a fall. This information aims to help you understand what can be done to maximise the health of your bones.

Bones are living and constantly renewing.

- Bone is at its strongest in your mid 20's and starts to become weaker and more fragile due to the normal aging process from the mid 30's.
- As we get older bone cells are broken down faster than new bone is being made. Bones then lose their density. If this happens too much and they become fragile



Osteoporosis

Often no symptoms – detected often after broken bones from an accident. Can be painful if really advanced.

Confirmed only via a DEXA/bone density scan which is normally arranged by your GP if you have increased risk factors.

If you need help to understand this leaflet or would like it in a different language or format such as large print, Braille or audio, please ask our staff or email:

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Risk factors you CANNOT change

- **Age:** more common in older people
- **Gender:** women are at increased risk
- **Family history:** of osteoporosis or hip fracture
- **Ethnicity:** Caucasian and Asian populations are at higher risk

Risk factors you CAN change

- **Diet:** lack of calcium or vitamin D
- **Weight:** overweight or eating disorders
- **Alcohol consumption**
- **Smoking**
- **Lack of weight bearing and resistance exercise**

Some medications (e.g long term steroid use and some epilepsy and cancer medications) and some medical conditions can put people at higher risk – discuss with GP if you are concerned.

What can I do to help improve the health of my bones?

- 1) **Increase physical activity**
Take more weight bearing exercise eg. standing exercise or using weights. Speak to a physiotherapist for advice.
- 2) **Make lifestyle changes**
Such as stop smoking, reduce alcohol consumption and monitor your weight. Speak to your GP about help with these.
- 3) **Review your diet**
Ensure diet contains calcium and vitamin D. The body needs vitamin D to help it absorb the calcium.

Calcium

Found in:

dairy, green leafy veg,
soya beans, tofu,
soya oat or rice drinks,
nuts, bread
(in UK calcium is added by law).

Vitamin D

Can get from diet and sunlight but it is hard to get it all from diet.

Found in:

oily fish, egg yolks,
fortified spreads and cereals, red meat, liver



The main source of vitamin D is sunlight

Only short periods of 10mins or so, once or twice a day to protect skin.

Some groups of people are recommended by the Department of Health to take supplements including the frail and housebound, those who wear covering clothes all year around and those with dark skin.

Actions:

- Speak to your GP or pharmacist if you are concerned or feel you may need to take calcium or vitamin D supplements.
- Speak to a physiotherapist if you need guidance about increasing your activity levels.
- Speak to GP or other health professional if you need support to make lifestyle changes.

Further information:

Royal Osteoporosis Society - <https://theros.org.uk/>
NHS - www.nhs.uk/conditions/osteoporosis