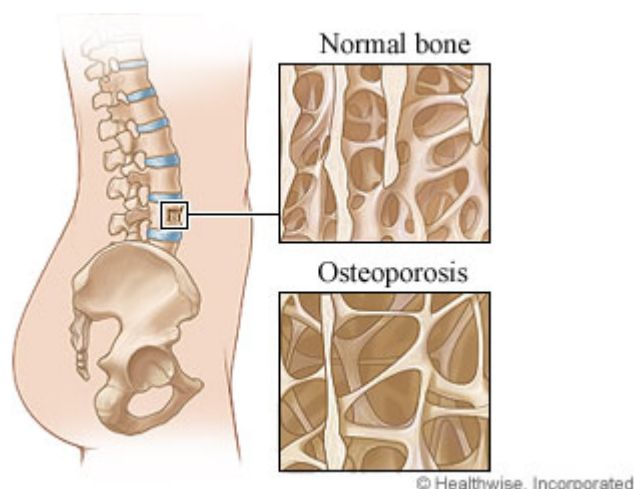


# Osteoporosis: Care Instructions



## Your Care Instructions

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Osteoporosis causes bones to become thin and weak. It is much more common in women than in men. Osteoporosis may be very advanced before you know you have it. Sometimes the first sign is a broken bone in the hip, spine, or wrist or sudden pain in your middle or lower back.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

## How can you care for yourself at home?

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- Your doctor may prescribe a bisphosphonate, such as risedronate (Actonel) or alendronate (Fosamax), for osteoporosis. If you are taking one of these medicines by mouth:
  - Take your medicine with a full glass of water when you first get up in the morning.
  - Do not lie down, eat, drink a beverage, or take any other medicine for at least 30 minutes after taking the drug. This helps prevent stomach problems.
  - Do not take your medicine late in the day if you forgot to take it in the morning. Skip it, and take the usual dose the next morning.
  - If you have side effects, tell your doctor. He or she may prescribe another medicine.
- Get enough calcium and vitamin D. The Institute of Medicine recommends adults younger than age 51 need 1,000 mg of calcium and 600 IU of vitamin D each day. Women ages 51 to 70 need 1,200 mg of calcium and 600 IU of vitamin D each day. Men ages 51 to 70 need 1,000 mg of calcium and 600 IU of vitamin D each day. Adults 71 and older need 1,200 mg of calcium and 800 IU of vitamin D each day.
  - Eat foods rich in calcium, like yogurt, cheese, milk, and dark green vegetables. This is a good way to get the calcium you need. You can get vitamin D from eggs, fatty fish, cereal, and milk.

- Talk to your doctor about taking a calcium plus vitamin D supplement. Be careful, though. Adults ages 19 to 50 should not get more than 2,500 mg of calcium and 4,000 IU of vitamin D each day, whether it is from supplements and/or food. Adults ages 51 and older should not get more than 2,000 mg of calcium and 4,000 IU of vitamin D each day from supplements and/or food.
- Limit alcohol to 2 drinks a day for men and 1 drink a day for women. Too much alcohol can cause health problems.
- Do not smoke. Smoking puts you at a much higher risk for osteoporosis. If you need help quitting, talk to your doctor about stop-smoking programs and medicines. These can increase your chances of quitting for good.
- Get regular bone-building exercise. Weight-bearing and resistance exercises keep bones healthy by working the muscles and bones against gravity. Start out at an exercise level that feels right for you. Add a little at a time until you can do the following:
  - Do 30 minutes of weight-bearing exercise on most days of the week. Walking, jogging, stair climbing, and dancing are good choices.
  - Do resistance exercises with weights or elastic bands 2 to 3 days a week.
- Reduce your risk of falls:
  - Wear supportive shoes with low heels and nonslip soles.
  - Use a cane or walker, if you need it. Use shower chairs and bath benches. Put in handrails on stairways, around your shower or tub area, and near the toilet.
  - Keep stairs, porches, and walkways well lit. Use night-lights.
  - Remove throw rugs and other objects that are in the way.
  - Avoid icy, wet, or slippery surfaces.
  - Keep a cordless phone and a flashlight with new batteries by your bed.

## When should you call for help?

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Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if you have any problems.

### Where can you learn more?

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Go to <https://www.healthwise.net/patiented>

Enter **K100** in the search box to learn more about "**Osteoporosis: Care Instructions**".

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