

Monthly  
Wellness  
SpotLight  
by PSA



IN GOOD HEALTH

**YOUR BONES MATTER! WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT OSTEOPOROSIS.**

Your bones are the framework of your body, which allow you to move and also protect your organs. Calcium and phosphorus are stored in your bones, and are both valuable minerals needed to strengthen your bones, help your nerves and muscles, kidneys, blood vessels, and prevent clotting.

One of the most common conditions that can affect bones is Osteoporosis, or “porous bones.” On the inside, bones look like a honeycomb with many small spaces. Osteoporosis enlarges the normal spaces inside the bones, which lessens bone density and strength. Because of this, those with Osteoporosis are at a higher risk for broken bones (especially ribs, hips, wrists, and spines) from routine activities, such as reaching for something or just standing up.

According to the [NIH Osteoporosis and Related Bone Diseases National Resource Center](#), more than 53 million people in the United States have or are at a very high risk of developing Osteoporosis. Women are more prone to Osteoporosis because they naturally start out with less bone density than men, and it continues to decrease with the loss of estrogen over time.

**Symptoms and prevention**

Unfortunately, the early stages of Osteoporosis don’t have any symptoms or warning signs. If you do have symptoms, they may include receding gums, weak grip strength, and weak, brittle nails. If you have a family history of Osteoporosis, make sure you let your doctor know. Follow the tips below to keep your bones healthy. Be sure to talk to your doctor before beginning any regimen.

**Calculate your calcium intake:**

More calcium is not always better. Your daily calcium intake should be:

- 1,000 mg if you are age 50 and younger
- 1,200 mg if you are age 51 and older

You can get most of the Calcium your body needs from a healthy diet. Try calculating your daily intake by looking at nutritional labels, which show intake based on a percentage. So, 25% of daily calcium means you are getting 250 mg of calcium per serving. You can also track your percentage of the recommended daily allowance (RDA) on apps like [www.myfitnesspal.com](http://www.myfitnesspal.com). Supplement only what you are missing.

**Calculate your vitamin D intake:**

Your body needs Vitamin D in order to absorb Calcium. Your liver and kidneys make Vitamin D when your skin is exposed to sunlight, but many of us do not get the RDA from the sun due to our use of sunscreen, our skin tone, or seasonal changes. It’s also hard to find vitamin D in foods unless it’s fortified. Your goal should be:

- 600 international units (IU) of vitamin D per day if you are age 70 or younger
- 800 IU if you are age 71 or older

Speak to your doctor about your specific needs.

**Increase your protein intake:**

Eating protein increases bone density. The RDA protein intake is 0.4 mg per pound of body weight.

**Exercise more:**

Exercise stimulates the cells that build strong bones. As part of your exercise regimen, add weight-bearing and resistance exercises at least three or four days a week.

**Implement these other healthy life habits:**

It’s never too late to adapt healthy habits to protect your bones. If you think you may have a problem with your bones, talk to your doctor as soon as possible, and if applicable, consider the below:

- Quit smoking
- Limit alcohol consumption
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Eat a well-balanced diet
- Stay active