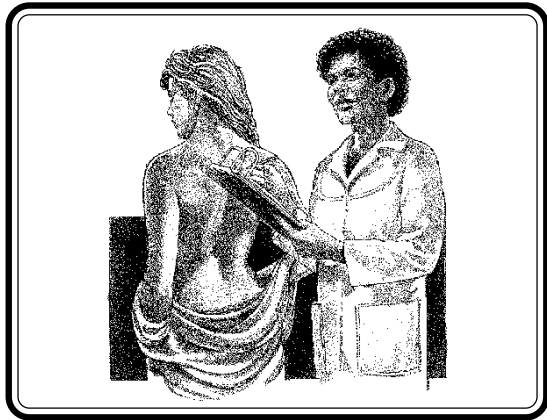


Your Health: Taking Control

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service • Oklahoma State University



LOWERING YOUR RISK FOR OSTEOPOROSIS

If you don't have osteoporosis you can take the following steps to help prevent it.

If you already have osteoporosis you can follow these same steps to slow down further bone loss.

- **Eat foods rich in calcium.** Bones are a calcium “bank” for the rest of the body. Bones may seem unchanging, but there're not. Bones are changing all the time, always being taken apart and rebuilt. Healthy bones release calcium whenever the body needs it, and they absorb calcium to rebuild and strengthen themselves. But if there is not enough calcium in your diet the body pulls more calcium out of the bones than it puts back. Over time your bones will become weak and brittle. If you get enough calcium in your diet your body won't have to pull as much calcium from the bones.
- **Eat a nutritionally adequate diet.** In addition to calcium, you need many other nutrients including protein, phosphorus, vitamins A, C and D, and copper to build healthy bones. A well balanced diet based on the Food Guide Pyramid is your best guideline for a healthy diet to get all the nutrients you need in the proper amounts.



- **Walk in the sunshine.** Sunlight helps your body produce vitamin D. Vitamin D helps your body use calcium.
- **Exercise.** Inactivity causes bone loss, and regular physical activity can strengthen your bones. Especially weight-bearing exercise reduces bone loss and stimulates new bone growth. Examples of weight-bearing exercises are walking, running, aerobics, racquet sports, hiking, jogging and weight-lifting.
- **Stop smoking.** Smoking increases bone loss.
- **Don't use alcohol in excess.** Too much alcohol can interfere with your body's ability to absorb calcium.
- **Talk to your doctor about estrogen therapy or other medications.** Estrogen replacement will slow down calcium loss; however, there may be serious side effects. Newer non-estrogen medications are available.

Suggested Readings:

Oklahoma State University Extension Fact Sheets:

T-3150, *Calcium*

T-3152, *Osteoporosis*

T-3122, *Vitamin and Mineral Supplements*

T-3165, *Food Guide Pyramid: Guide to Daily Food Choices*

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***For more information, contact your OSU
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