

FRAGILITY FRACTURES: PREVENTING FUTURE FRACTURES

You have seen your orthopaedic surgeon and the diagnosis is official – you fractured a bone. A broken bone, which is the same thing as a fracture, can be very painful and traumatic. Even if your fracture occurred in an accident or fall that seemed like an isolated event, it may still indicate a problem with your bone health.

The Connection to Bone Disease/Osteoporosis

Many people are unaware of the link between fractures and osteoporosis (a medical condition in which the bones become brittle and fragile from loss of tissue, typically as a result of hormonal changes, or deficiency of calcium or vitamin D). If you are over the age of 50, there is a very good chance that your fracture is related to osteoporosis sometimes called “brittle bone disease.” Osteoporosis, also known as porous bone, bone that is full of holes, is a disease characterized by low bone mass, which makes bones more likely to break.

BONES HEALTH OSTEOPOROSIS IS A DISEASE WHERE INCREASED BONE WEAKNESS INCREASES THE RISK OF A BROKEN BONE



HEALTHY BONE

OSTEOPOROSIS

SEVERE OSTEOPOROSIS



Weak bone is more porous than strong bone. It is easy to see the difference in these illustrations, but people usually do not feel the difference at all... until it is too late and a fracture occurs!

Osteoporosis is a silent disease – until a fracture occurs. **One in three women and one in five men over the age of 50 years old will suffer from a fragility fracture.**

Future fractures may be preventable! Early recognition and appropriate nutritional and medical management have been shown to reduce risk of future hip, vertebral, and other osteoporotic-related fractures.

7 SMART STEPS TO BETTER BONE HEALTH

Fortunately, there is a lot that you can do to prevent fractures. It is a matter of taking advantage of proper diet, exercise, medications, and other resources to you right now. Below are a few things that you can do to get started.

1. Talk with your Health Care Provider

Discuss your fracture. Ask your health care provider if your break may be related to osteoporosis. **Seek advice about bone mineral density (BMD) testing (often referred to as a DEXA scan).** It is the best way to detect low bone density, and its most extreme form, osteoporosis.

Also discuss medications that have been proven effective at minimizing bone loss and/or reducing the risk of future fractures. Several medications have been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the treatment of osteoporosis.

Developed in conjunction with the physicians at South Bend Orthopaedics

2. Get Adequate Calcium

Everyone needs calcium to maintain strong, healthy bones and muscles. **The National Institutes of Health (NIH) recommends that women over the age of 50 and men over the age of 70 get 1200 milligrams of calcium per day.** If you are not getting enough calcium, you may be able to increase your calcium intake by adding some calcium-rich foods like milk, cheese, broccoli, and almonds. If you do not get enough calcium through your diet and multivitamins, calcium supplements will also work.

3. Get Adequate Vitamin D

Vitamin D, the “sunshine vitamin,” plays a critical role in helping your body absorb calcium from your digestive system into your bloodstream. **The National Osteoporosis Foundation recommends 800-1,000 international Units (IU) of vitamin D per day.** Patients who have suffered from stress or fragility fractures often may need even more.

Sunshine and vitamin D fortified foods, like milk can help you meet your daily quota. Vitamin D supplements are also available and frequently necessary. You can discuss with your healthcare provider which options are best for you.

4. Get Ample Exercise

Exercise is one of the best ways to preserve bone density and maintain muscle strength. To build and maintain bone density, do **weight-bearing and resistance exercises**, which make your body move against gravity.

Some examples of weight-bearing exercises include dancing, walking, and using a stationary bike. Resistance exercises to consider include limited weightlifting, using exercise bands, or rising up and down on your toes to strengthen your bones and maintain muscle strength.

5. Prevent Falls

You can reduce your chance of falling and causing a fracture by playing it safe whenever you are:

Outside of Your Home:

- Wear shoes that offer good traction.
- Be careful about floors that can be slippery.
- Check out curbs before stepping up or down.
- In bad weather, use a cane or walker if you feel unstable. Or simply do not go out!

Inside of Your Home:

- Use nightlights.
- Keep floors clear of clutter.
- Do not walk around in socks or slippers.
- Keep electrical cords out of the way.
- Use a rubber mat in the shower or tub. Consider installing handles or using a shower chair.

You can also reduce falls by performing activities that boost your balance, flexibility, and strength. Balance is the ability to keep your body stable while moving or standing still. Activities like tai chi, swimming, water aerobics, and stretching exercises like yoga may help.

6. Do Not Smoke

Tobacco is toxic to your bones, making you more at risk for low bone mass and osteoporosis. Do not smoke. Though that is easier said than done, investigate programs, medications, and other stop-smoking methods that offer help.

7. Limit Alcohol Intake

Controlling your alcohol intake can connect you to healthier bones. Drinking heavily can increase bone loss and the risk of sustaining a fragility fracture from a fall. According to the National Osteoporosis Foundation, on average, alcohol intake of 3 or more drinks per day is detrimental to bone health.

Want More Information? Visit or call the National Osteoporosis Foundation: www.nof.org | 1 (800) 231-4222