

Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is a condition where bones become brittle and can break or crack more easily. It happens when bones lose minerals (like calcium).

Osteoporosis is more common as people get older but can be prevented. You can reduce your risk of developing osteoporosis by avoiding risk factors. Risk factors include smoking, excessive alcohol intake, excessive caffeine intake and low levels of physical activity. To help protect your bones and keep them strong, try these ideas.

Eat four serves of calcium-rich foods each day

One serve is:

- a cup (250mL) of cow's milk or plant-based milks fortified calcium
- a tub of yoghurt (200g) or a cup of custard
- two slices of cheese (40g)
- half a cup of tinned fish with bones (for example salmon or sardines).

Be physically active

- If you have osteoporosis, it is safer to do low-impact exercises such as climbing stairs or tai chi.
- Avoid activities that involve quick movement or twisting of the spine to avoid fractures.
- Strength training is important, but if you have osteoporosis then you should only lift a moderate amount of weight. Avoid activities that involve lifting heavy weights, overhead lifting and deep forward bending (such as rowing or sit ups).
- Try doing balance activities such as standing on toes, heel-to-toe walks and standing on one leg.

Get some sunshine

- Sunshine is the best source of vitamin D, which is important for keeping bones strong.
- Try to spend a few minutes outside most days in summer and a few hours each week from May to August in Tasmania.
- Expose some skin on your arms and face whenever you are in the sunshine to help your body get enough vitamin D.

This general advice was accurate at the time of publication (June 2020).
For more information about nutrition and your individual needs, see your GP
or an Accredited Practising Dietitian.