

Medications That Can Be Bad for Your Bones

If you take a moment to read the tiny contents of the package insert that comes with your prescription drugs, you will see in the section on side effects that there are many that can harm your bones. Some drugs can cause bone loss and some may increase the chance of breaking a bone. If you have certain diseases, you may not have a choice but to take one of these medication. If you do take certain medications that can cause bone loss or increase your risk of breaking a bone, it is extra important to take steps to protect your bones.

The most common medications that can harm your bones include:

- High doses of cortisone-like pills, such as prednisone (more than 5 mg a day)
- High doses of thyroid medicines (more than 250 mcg a day)
- Drugs that reduce your estrogen or androgen levels
- Certain diabetes medications
- Certain stomach medications such as antacids that contain aluminum or proton pump inhibitors
- Certain antidepressants, particularly selective serotonin receptor uptake inhibitors (SSRI's)
- Some blood thinners and anticoagulants
- Loop diuretics
- Some anti-convulsive medications

If you are taking any medications that can harm your bones, these are some important steps your doctor or health care provider may take to reduce the harmful effects:

- Know your bone density which can help inform you about your risk of breaking a bone and may be useful to monitor any potential bone loss.
- If you are at high risk for breaking a bone, your health care provider may suggest an osteoporosis medication to reduce the harmful effects on your skeleton.
- Take as low a dose as possible, for as short a time as possible – but talk with your health care provider before you make any changes.
- Make sure that you get 3-4 servings of a calcium-rich food every day. If you cannot eat dairy or calcium-fortified food, you may need a calcium supplement.
- Be sure that you have an optimal vitamin D level (≥ 30 ng/mL or ≥ 74.9 nmol/L). People with breast cancer and prostate cancer may need higher blood levels of vitamin D.
- Practice great posture and use good body mechanics to prevent spine fractures.
- Strengthen your legs and do balance exercises to prevent falls and fractures.
- Remove trip hazards from your home.

For more information on how these medications impact the skeleton, go to

www.americanbonehealth.org.

Medications

that can cause bone loss and contribute to osteoporosis

Medication	Impact on bone	Used for	Common brands
Steroids or corticosteroids	Negatively affects bone building process	rheumatoid arthritis, asthma, Crohn's disease,	Prednisone, prednisolone, Medrol, Deltasone, Decadron, cortisone, Cortel, Celestone, Aristocort, beclomethasone
Thyroid	Interferes with bone-repair and bone-building	Hypothyroidism	Synthroid, Levothyroid, Levoxyl, Unithroid, Armour Thyroid
Antacids with aluminum	Negatively affects calcium and phosphate absorption	heartburn, acid reflux, indigestion, Stomach ulcers, excess stomach acidity	Aludros, Amphojel, Gaviscon, Gelusil, Kolantyl, Maalox, Mylanta, Riopan
Proton Pump Inhibitors	Inhibits calcium absorption	acid reflux, stress gastritis, peptic ulcers	Zantac, Protonix, Prilosec, Aciphex, Dexilant, Axid, Nexium
Some Antibiotics	Impairs healthy bone structure and function	bacterial Infections	Declomycin, Dynacin, Terramycin, Achromycin
Anticonvulsants	Inhibits vitamin D metabolism in liver	seizures	Dilantin, Phenobarbital, Depakote
Loop Diuretics	Induce calcium, Potassium and Magnesium excretion	high blood pressure, congestive heart failure	Lasix, Aldactone, Dyazide, Bumex, Diamox and Edecrin
Blood thinners	Inhibit calcium absorption and bone-building	heart and vascular disease	Heparin, Coumadin, warfarin
Lithium	Increases parathyroid which increases bone resorption	bipolar disorder	Eskalith, Eskalith- CR, Lithobid,
Chemotherapy /Methotrexate	Prevents bone formation	rheumatoid arthritis, psoriasis, breast cancer	Rheumatrex Dose Pack, Trexall, Adriamycin, Adriamycin RDF, Rubex, Adriamycin PFS
Progesterin-based contraceptives	May increase bone destruction	injectable contraceptive	Depo-Provera
Premenopausal	May cause increased bone destruction	Synthetic antiestrogen used for breast cancer	Tamoxifen
Thiazolidinedione	Inhibits bone formation	Type II diabetes	Actos and Avandia

If you are on any of the medications listed, check with your doctor about your bone health. If you are taking FOUR or more medicines you are at greater risk of having a fall. Review your medication with your doctor regularly.