

How to Know if Your Bones Are at Risk

[Osteoporosis is known as the “silent thief”](#) because you might not know you have the disease until you break a bone. Osteoporosis makes your bones brittle and weak, so something like a fall or twisting awkwardly can break a bone. Once you have had a fracture due to osteoporosis, you are at high risk of having another.

If you are at risk, you and your doctor need to take steps to reduce bone loss and prevent fractures. The first step is knowing your risk.

What We Know

There are [several factors](#) that determine your risk of osteoporosis and fractures. Maybe the most important is genetics. If your mother or grandmother had a hip fracture, you might be at risk too. Other factors include smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, a history of certain diseases and taking [certain medications](#).

American Bone Health’s [Fracture Risk Calculator](#)[™] takes into account these and other factors for adults who are age 45 and older. The calculator then estimates your risk of breaking a bone in the next 10 years.

Before you have a broken bone, you can find out whether you have osteoporosis [by taking a bone density test](#)—also called a DXA test or a bone mineral density (BMD) scan. This test gives you a number called a T-score that [measures your bone mass](#).

With your 10-year risk and your bone density test results, you can [have a conversation with your doctor](#) about creating a bone health plan.

What You Can Do

Now that you know your risk factors and your bone density results, there are things you can do to safeguard your bone health.

Practice [bone-safe exercise](#) to increase strength and maintain flexibility while [avoiding movements](#) that could increase your fracture risk. Some exercises can increase balance to [help you avoid falls](#) that can cause fractures.

Make sure you’re getting [enough calcium and vitamin D](#) in your diet. Talk to your doctor before taking these supplements.

Ask your doctor if you should take an [osteoporosis medicine](#) that can reduce your risk of fracture by about one-third. You should also discuss how to [lower the risk](#) of [rare side effects](#) from these drugs.

How You Can Be Sure

We encourage you to know your risk, to [take care of your bones](#) and to talk to your doctor about creating a plan to manage your bone health.

Our [website](#) is full of information to get you started. We are here to help.