

SINAI HEALTH LINK

is produced by the Public Affairs

Department of Sinai Health System,

California Avenue at 15th Street, Chicago, IL 60608

HEALTH LINK

1-888-AT-SINAI (1-888-287-4624)

PREVENT THE PITFALLS OF OSTEOPOROSIS

Getting a glass of water.
Walking to the store.
Picking up your grandchild.

These things are easy for most people. But not if you've got osteoporosis.

Osteoporosis means weak bones – so weak they may break easily. In bad cases, just lifting things or falling down can cause serious injury. Some people are so afraid of falling, they just stay home and don't do anything. But that can weaken them even more.

"Older people get osteoporosis more often because bones get weaker as we get older," says William Wason, MD, a rheumatologist at Mount Sinai Hospital in Chicago. "Women get it far more often than men because they have less bone tissue to start, and menopause weakens bones."

A bone-density test can tell how solid your bones are – and it's painless.



There's no cure for osteoporosis, but most people can be helped. But the best treatment is to prevent it. You can do that at any age.

First, eat food with plenty of calcium and vitamin D. If you don't get enough, the body takes it from the bones.

Walking and other exercises slow bone loss.

Your doctor may suggest medicine to stop or treat osteoporosis.

That is only part of the answer, though. If you have osteoporosis, you need to stay

active but avoid falling.

To cut the risk of falls, have your sight and hearing tested often. Wear rubber-soled shoes that don't slip. Get up slowly after sitting or lying down. Use a cane or walker if you need one.

Swimming also helps. It makes you stronger and more flexible.

Some people are more likely to develop osteoporosis. But everyone stays healthier by eating right, keeping fit and taking care not to fall.

RISKY BUSINESS

You can't do much about some things that boost your risk of osteoporosis – things like your age, family or bone structure.

But you can control others. Improve the odds – and your health – by:

- *Smoking less.*
- *Drinking less alcohol.*
- *Gaining weight if you're small. (Ask your doctor about this.)*
- *Getting enough calcium.*
- *Staying active. Walk. Carry groceries. Lift your grandkids.*

To find out if you have osteoporosis, get a bone density test. Call Mount Sinai Hospital at (773) 257-5748.

QUESTIONS ABOUT OSTEOPOROSIS? SEE YOUR FAMILY DOCTOR OR CALL 1-888-AT-SINAI TO FIND A SINAI DOCTOR NEAR YOU.

TIPS FOR PREVENTING FALLS AT HOME

- *Clear out the clutter. Get rid of anything you could trip or slip on.*
- *Have lots of light in stairways, halls and entrances.*
- *Put light switches at both the top and bottom of stairs.*
- *Toss the throw rugs. Make sure area rugs don't slip and slide.*
 - *Tighten stairs and railings.*
 - *Arrange furniture so it's not in the way when you walk.*
 - *Use nightlights.*
 - *Tuck loose wires or cords out of the way.*
- *Install grab bars in the bathroom.*
- *Add slip-proof tape to bathtubs and showers.*
- *Wear sturdy, rubber-soled shoes.*
- *Clean up spills immediately.*
- *Put non-skid rubber mats at the kitchen sink and stove.*



ASK YOUR SINAI DOCTOR



Q. I know I need calcium and vitamin D to prevent osteoporosis. But how much, and how do I get it?

A. It's easy to get the calcium you need – at least 1,200 milligrams a day for anyone 51 and older – just by drinking low-fat milk and eating broccoli and cheese. Some kinds of orange juice, cereal and breakfast bars have added calcium.

The best source of vitamin D is the sun. Two or three times a week, spend 10-15 minutes outside with your arms and face uncovered. That will give you all you need. Other good sources are fortified dairy products, egg yolks, liver and saltwater fish like mackerel, sardines and herring.

Healthy Living Tip:

Want more calcium from the foods you eat?

Add a little nonfat powdered dry milk to soups, casseroles, puddings, pastries and other foods you cook. You can even slip a little into your milk.

Each tablespoon you add gives you an extra 52 milligrams, the National Osteoporosis Foundation says.