

Bone Health

Our bones are made up of living cells and minerals like calcium that give them strength to support the body. After the age of 30, men and women both face a steady decline in bone density. "Osteopenia" means diminished bone density while "osteoporosis" is bone loss to the point of fracture risk.

Self Care

How healthy is your diet?
Exercise Options.pdf

Causes of bone loss

Inadequate intake of calcium and vitamin D
Sustained weight loss
Inactivity
Excessive use of alcohol, tobacco, caffeine, salt and fat
Menopause/andropause
Endocrine disorders, long term steroid use, and some cancers

Evaluating bone density

Bone density or DEXA scans are a way of measuring the strength of your bones. Screenings generally begin at age 55 (or younger depending on your health and family history). Osteopenia is a T score less than -1.4 and osteoporosis is a T score less than -2.4.

Prevention

Good general nutrition
Have your vitamin D25 level checked
Avoid tobacco and excessive consumption of alcohol
Prevent falls with fall-prevention strategies

The Best Prevention of All: Exercise

Exercise is the cornerstone of good bone health. Strength training can help prevent significant declines in bone density. Physical activity provides mechanical stress to bone, which stimulates bone formation. Men and women with osteopenia or osteoporosis (and perimenopausal females) need exercise to maintain bone mass. Try to impact-load both the forearms and legs on most days. ("Impact loading" means exercises that support the body's own weight.) Aerobic exercise alone is insufficient.

Note that an elliptical machine or Stairmaster is less impact-loading and should be used with other, more impact-loading workouts.