

Top 10 Myths About Osteoporosis



Standing Tall for You®

When you think about staying healthy, you probably think about making lifestyle changes to prevent cancer and heart disease. Keeping your bones healthy may not be at the top of your wellness list. The following osteoporosis myths may make you think again.

Myth 1

Most people don't need to worry about osteoporosis.

Osteoporosis is a condition that causes broken bones in millions of Americans. 44 million Americans have low bone density or osteoporosis. In fact, about one in two women and up to one in four men over the age of 50 will break a bone due to osteoporosis. By 2020, half of all Americans over age 50 are expected to have low bone density or osteoporosis.

Myth 2

Osteoporosis is only a problem for older Caucasian women.

While osteoporosis is common among white women, men and women of all races can have the disease. Also, while the disease is more common in older people, it can strike at any age.

Myth 3

You don't need to worry about osteoporosis if you break a bone from a serious fall or accident.

Broken bones in people over the age of 50 can be the first sign of low bone density or osteoporosis. Broken bones from serious falls or accidents may be related to osteoporosis.

Myth 4

People with osteoporosis can feel their bones getting weaker.

Osteoporosis is known as a "silent disease." Often, breaking a bone is the first clue you have osteoporosis. Some people learn that they have osteoporosis after they lose height from one or more broken bones in the spine. These broken bones can even occur without any noticeable pain.

Myth 5

An osteoporosis test is painful and exposes you to a lot of radiation.

Experts recommend a bone mineral density test using a central DXA (dual energy x-ray absorptiometry) machine. It is simple, painless, takes 5-10 minutes and uses very little radiation. You are exposed to 10-15 times more radiation from flying in a plane roundtrip between New York and San Francisco.



The way you *should* be treated.™

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Myth 6

Children and teens do not need to worry about their bone health.

Children and teens can build strong bones and prevent osteoporosis by being physically active and getting enough calcium and vitamin D.

Myth 7

If you drink a lot of milk and exercise, you are not at risk for osteoporosis.

Even if you drink plenty of milk and exercise, you still may be at risk for osteoporosis. There are many reasons why people get osteoporosis.

Some of these include:

- Having a family history of broken bones
- Being small and thin
- Smoking
- Drinking too much alcohol
- Taking certain medications
- Having certain medical conditions

You should ask your healthcare provider if you have any risk factors for osteoporosis.

Myth 8

Osteoporosis isn't serious.

Broken bones from osteoporosis can be very painful and serious. Broken bones can affect physical, mental and emotional health, and in some cases, result in death. It is important to take steps throughout your life to protect your bones.

Myth 9

Taking extra calcium supplements can help prevent osteoporosis.

Taking more calcium than you need does not provide any extra benefits. Estimate the amount of calcium you get from foods on a typical day. This will help you to figure out whether a supplement is right for you and how much calcium you should take.

Adults under age 50 need 1,000 mg of calcium every day. Adults age 50 and older need 1,200 mg of calcium every day.

Myth 10

Most people do not need to take a vitamin D supplement.

Vitamin D helps your body use calcium. If you don't get enough vitamin D, or if your body doesn't absorb it well, you are at greater risk for osteoporosis.

Your skin makes vitamin D when it is exposed to the sun. It is also available in a few foods. Many people need a vitamin D supplement.

Adults under age 50 should get between 400 and 800 International Units (IU) of vitamin D every day. Adults age 50 and older should get between 800 and 1,000 IU of vitamin D every day.

Your healthcare provider may also give you a blood test to check your vitamin D levels. This is a test of 25-hydroxyvitamin D.

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