

# Osteoporosis



Osteoporosis is a disease in which bones become fragile and more likely to break. Women are four times more likely than men to develop osteoporosis. Osteoporosis is most common in women age 50 and older because as we age our estrogen levels decrease, and the lack of estrogen causes the cells that build new bone to be less active than cells that remove old bone. Therefore, your bones are being torn down faster than they are being built up.

If not prevented or if left untreated, osteoporosis can progress painlessly until a bone breaks. These broken bones, also known as fractures, occur typically in the hip, spine and wrist. Although you cannot prevent the estrogen loss that occurs with menopause, there are steps you can take to take care of your bones, and your doctor can help you.

## SYMPTOMS OF OSTEOPOROSIS

Osteoporosis is often called a “silent disease” because bone loss occurs without symptoms. People may not know that they have osteoporosis until their bones become so weak that a sudden strain, bump or fall causes a fracture or a vertebra to collapse.

## PREVENTING AND MANAGING OSTEOPOROSIS

Osteoporosis is largely preventable for most people. Building strong bones, especially before the age of 30, can be the best defense against developing osteoporosis, and a healthy lifestyle can be critically important for keeping bones strong. Prevention of this disease is very important because, while there are treatments for osteoporosis, there is currently no cure.

The National Osteoporosis Foundation (NOF) recommends five steps to prevent osteoporosis, noting that no one step alone is enough to prevent osteoporosis:

- Get your daily recommended amounts of calcium; depending on your age, an appropriate calcium intake falls between 1000 and 1300 mg a day. Curves Bioavailable Calcium has been proven through research conducted by the Exercise and Sports Nutrition Laboratory at Texas A&M University\* to help you reach this intake level, and is proven to promote greater weight loss when combined with exercise and dieting
- Engage in regular weight-bearing exercise, like the resistance training provided by your regular Curves workout
- Avoid smoking and excessive alcohol intake
- Talk to your healthcare provider about bone health
- When appropriate, have a bone density test and take medication

## CALCIUM INTAKE BY AGE

*The Dietary Reference Intake (DRI) for calcium, as recommended by the National Academy of Science (NAS), is as follows:*

AGE (years)	CALCIUM (mg/day)	DAIRY SERVINGS*
1–3	500	3 servings**
4–8	800	3 servings
9–18	1300	4 servings
19–50	1000	3 servings
51+	1200	4 servings

\* The recommended dairy servings are based on the NAS calcium recommendations. A serving size of dairy equals 1 cup (8 ounces) of milk, 1 cup of yogurt and 1 to 1.5 ounces of cheese.

\*\* Serving sizes for children ages 1–3 are two-thirds the adult size. For example, a serving of milk for kids ages 1–3 is 6 ounces, rather than the 8-ounce size for older kids, teens, and adults

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## OSTEOPOROSIS AND EXERCISE

Exercise is also important to good bone health, and it is never too late to start. The NOF recommends a combination of strength training, weight-bearing aerobic activities and flexibility exercises, all which you get through Curves.

General recommendations include:

- Do 30 minutes of aerobic activity two or three times a week (your three weekly Curves workouts also meet this recommendation)
- Undertake strength training once or twice weekly (or, complete your Curves workouts for this added benefit)
- Include flexibility exercises or stretching (this is part of the complete Curves workout)
- Avoid high impact activities or those that require sudden, forceful movements

Because of the varying degrees of osteoporosis and the risk of fracture, certain strength-training, aerobic and flexibility exercises may be unsuitable. Ask your doctor or physical therapist whether you're at risk of osteoporosis-related problems, and find out what exercises are appropriate for you.

\* To date, the Exercise and Sports Nutrition Laboratory at Texas A&M University, led by Dr. Richard Kreider; Ph.D., FACSM, has conducted numerous studies examining the Curves program. For more information on this research, please visit <http://curves.tamu.edu/>.