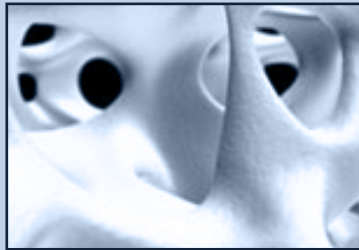
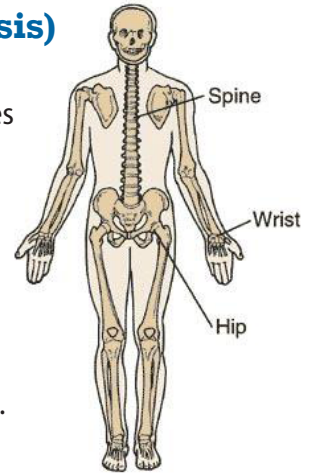




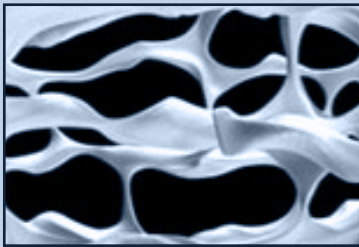
## What I Should Know About Osteoporosis!

### What is osteoporosis (ost-tee-oh-pore-oh-sis)

- » Bones are supposed to be thick and strong. In osteoporosis, bones have pores in them like the holes in Swiss cheese. These tiny holes make bones weaker. If bones are weak, they break more easily.
- » The bones most commonly broken because of osteoporosis are the hip, wrist, and spine.



Healthy Bone



Bone with Osteoporosis



Osteoporosis can make your spine curve too much

### Who gets osteoporosis?

- » 1 in 2 women who are older than 50 have osteoporosis.
- » 1 in 4 men over 50 have osteoporosis.
- » Some medications can make bones weaker. Drugs that help stop seizures from happening (anti-epileptics) can weaken bones.
- » If you take corticosteroids for a long time, your bones weaken. Corticosteroids are a type of medication used for many diseases like asthma.
- » People with Down syndrome and Cerebral Palsy are more likely to get osteoporosis.
- » If you use a wheelchair, you also might have problems with osteoporosis.
- » Many medical problems can increase your risk – like Type 1 diabetes, and early menopause (that is when you stop getting your period before age 40).

### How do I know if I have osteoporosis?

- » Usually, people do not know their bones are weak.
- » DEXA is test that takes X-rays of your bones to see how strong they are.
- » If you are a woman and 65 or older you should talk about a DEXA test with your doctor. If you are a man you should also ask if or when you may need the DEXA test.



DEXA test



- » Some people may need to have a test at a younger age (e.g. a person with Down syndrome, or a person with epilepsy), so do check with your doctor when you should have your DEXA or a similar test.
- » One sign of osteoporosis is a having a hunched back. Osteoporosis can even make you shorter.
- » Weaker bones can lead to many small breaks (called fractures), which can cause lots of pain.
- » Some people might suffer with large fractures and may need surgery.

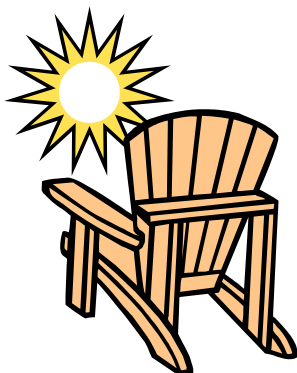
## What can I do to make my bones stronger?

### Get enough calcium every day!

- » Bones are made up of a lot of calcium. Calcium is in different foods like milk, cheese, yogurt, broccoli, and spinach, but you can also get it from calcium pills.

### Get enough vitamin D!

- » Vitamin D helps your body use the calcium you get from food or pills.
- » Fish, like salmon, tuna, and sardines are another way to get vitamin D.
- » Your body can make vitamin D from being in sunlight – you need about 10 to 15 minutes of sunlight 2-3 times a week. But always avoid too much sun because that can cause problems too!



### Don't smoke!

- » Smoking can harm your bones and make you more likely to get osteoporosis.

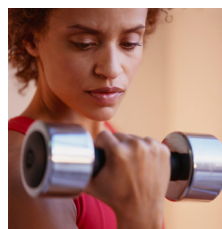
### Don't drink too much alcohol!

- » Alcohol can make it harder for your body to use the calcium you get from foods or pills. Also, if you drink too much, your balance will be poor and you could fall and hurt your bones.

### Exercise!

- » Keeping active is important. It keeps your bones and muscles strong and makes your balance better (so you are less likely to fall).

- » Walking, dancing, weight lifting, and gardening are some examples of fun ways to keep your bones strong.



- » Using a wheelchair, or having physical disabilities doesn't stop you from exercising. Visit [www.ncpad.org](http://www.ncpad.org) for tips.

### Always stay safe!

- » We all trip from time to time – but this puts us at risk for falls and hurting our bones. Here are some ways to be safer:
  - » Put rubber mats and grab bars in the shower or tub.
  - » Keep floors clear of clutter and watch out for throw rugs.

### Talk to your doctor about medications to help make your bones stronger.

- » There are many different medications to make bones stronger. Talk to your doctor about whether or not you need these medications and which are best for you.



**Always remember to ask your doctor if you have any questions!**

LaMartin, K. M., & Perkins, E. A. (2012). *What I Should Know About Osteoporosis*. Education for Lifelong Health Series, Florida Center for Inclusive Communities. [www.flcic.org](http://www.flcic.org).

Development of this material was supported by the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (#90-DD-0668, Fox and Kincaid). For further information, visit [www.flcic.org](http://www.flcic.org).

