



Better bone health for everybody

# All about osteoporosis and bones



**Easy  
Read**

# Easy Read



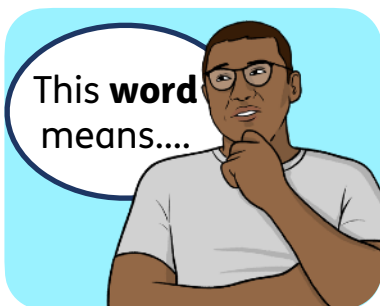
This is an Easy Read version of some information. It may not include all of the information, but it will tell you about the important parts.



This Easy Read booklet uses easier words and pictures. Some people may still want help to read it.



Some words are in **bold**. This means the writing is thicker and darker. These are the important words in the booklet.



Sometimes if a bold word is hard to understand, we will explain what it means.



[Blue and underlined](#) words show links that take you to websites and email addresses. You can click on these links on a computer.

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You can fill in a quick survey to say what you think about this Easy Read booklet:

[forms.office.com/e/mn2tVxMyuR](https://forms.office.com/e/mn2tVxMyuR)

# About this booklet



We are the Royal Osteoporosis Society.  
We are a charity that supports people to  
have healthy bones.



**Osteoporosis** is a health condition that  
makes your bones weaker.



Weaker bones can break more easily.



If you have osteoporosis, we can give you  
information and support.



This booklet explains what osteoporosis is  
and how you can look after your bones.

# Your bones



Osteoporosis is a health condition. It makes your bones weaker.



Osteoporosis can make it more likely that you will break a bone.

This usually happens after a fall.



You might hear doctors talking about **fractures**. This is the same as breaking a bone.



People with osteoporosis are most likely to break bones in their wrists, hips and spine.

Broken bones can cause pain.



But broken bones can get better.

# What causes osteoporosis?



Many things cause osteoporosis.

You are more likely to get osteoporosis if:



- Your parents had it.



- You are getting older.



- You are a woman.



But other people, like men and younger people can also get osteoporosis.



Some health conditions and medicines make it more likely that you will get osteoporosis.



You are more likely to get osteoporosis if you smoke and drink a lot of alcohol.

# How doctors can tell if you have osteoporosis



Doctors cannot tell if you have osteoporosis just from how you look or feel.



You cannot feel if you have osteoporosis.



You will not feel pain, unless you have broken a bone.



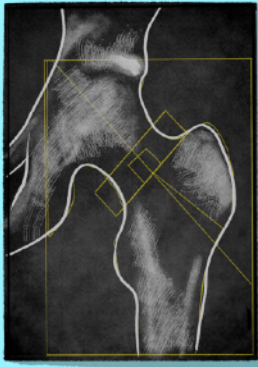
But there are some tests that doctors can do.



These tests will help them find out if you are more likely to break a bone.



# Bone density scan



A **bone density scan** is a type of test where doctors check how strong your bones are.

Sometimes it is called a **DEXA scan**.



A bone density scan is a simple scan. It is very safe. It does not hurt.



You will need to lie down for 10 to 15 minutes.



The **DEXA machine** will scan you.

A **DEXA machine** is a machine that scans your bones to look inside them .



Doctors do not always need to do a bone density scan to tell if you have osteoporosis.

But it can help them to decide how to help you.



## T-score

The results of a bone density scan are a number. This number is called a **T-score**.



The T-score shows how strong your bones are compared to a young healthy adult.



If it is very low, that means you have osteoporosis.



The bone density scan might say that you have a condition called **osteopenia**.



## T-score

Low

This is when your T-score is low, but not low enough to be osteoporosis.

# Fracture risk assessment



You will have to have a **fracture risk assessment**.

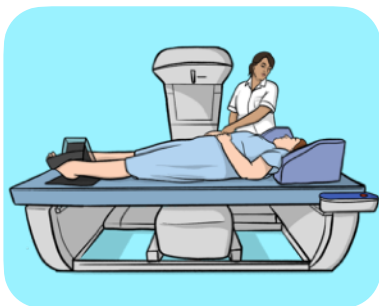
This is a form the doctor fills out with you.



It gives your healthcare team more information about you.



It includes your height, weight and information about your health.



It will also include your DEXA scan result if you have one.



It helps doctors know if you have osteoporosis.



If you do have osteoporosis, it helps doctors work out your chance of breaking a bone.



This will help them decide whether you need medicine to help your bones stay stronger.

# Medicines for osteoporosis



If a doctor offers you medicine for osteoporosis, this means you have a higher chance of breaking a bone.



Osteoporosis medicines make bones less likely to break.



The most common medicines for osteoporosis are called **bisphosphonates**.

They have names like alendronate, ibandronate, risedronate and zoledronate.



Medicines are given in different ways. The most common medicines are tablets you swallow.



All of these medicines are safe for people with osteoporosis.



But there are different medicines, if these are not right for you.



Usually, it is your **GP** who will choose which medicine you take.

Your **GP** is your local family doctor.



But your GP might send you to a special doctor if they think you need it.



Nobody can make you take a medicine if you do not want it.



But it is important that you understand how osteoporosis medicines can help you.



If you have any questions about your medicine, speak to your doctor.

# Getting better after breaking a bone



**6 to 8 weeks**

If you break a bone, it usually gets better in about 6 to 8 weeks.



But it can take longer for you to be able to use the bone like you did before.

## Broken wrist



If you've broken your wrist, you will usually need a plaster cast until it is better.



After about 6 weeks, you will be able to take the cast off.

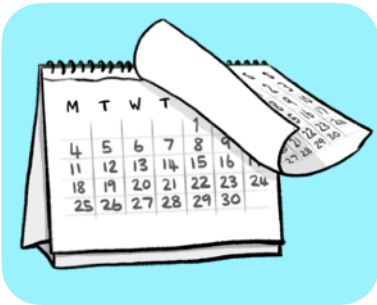
Then you can start doing exercises to help your wrist feel stronger again.



# Broken hip



If you have broken your hip, you will usually need to have an operation.



It can take a long time to get better.

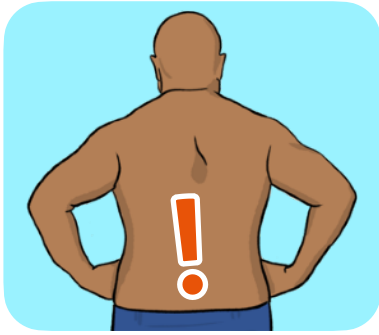


You might need support from a health professional called a **physiotherapist** to help you get better.



You might need help with your everyday tasks and activities.

# Spinal fracture



A **spinal fracture** means that a bone in your back has been squashed because of osteoporosis.

This is a type of broken bone. It can take a few months to heal.



This is not the same as breaking your back from a big accident.



It can hurt a lot. But sometimes it does not hurt at all.



You can usually get better at home.



The bones in your back will not go back to their old shape.

So you might have a bent back after a spinal fracture.

# Pain



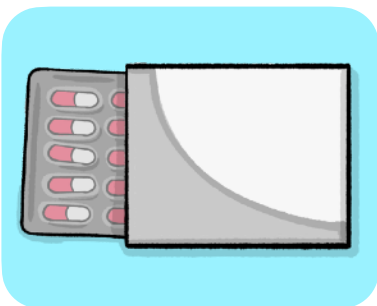
It can hurt when you break a bone. This can be a strong pain and come on quickly.



Healed bones can sometimes continue to cause pain.



There are things you can do to help with the pain.

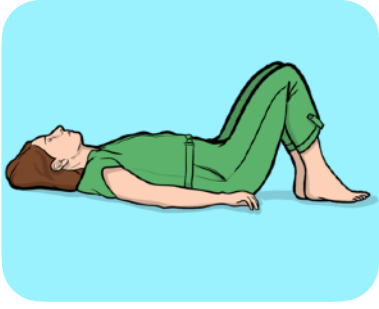


You can buy medicines like **paracetamol** and **ibuprofen** from your pharmacy.



If these do not work, you can speak to your GP.

They might be able to give you stronger pain medicine.



There are other ways of helping with pain too, like exercises or ice packs.

# Looking after your bones



Eating well and having a balanced diet can help to look after your bones.



Try not to drink too much coffee or fizzy drinks, like cola.



Try not to eat too much salt.



**Calcium** and **Vitamin D** are good for your bones. They are in different foods and you can get Vitamin D from the sun.

# Calcium



Your doctor might tell you to get more calcium.

You can get this from:



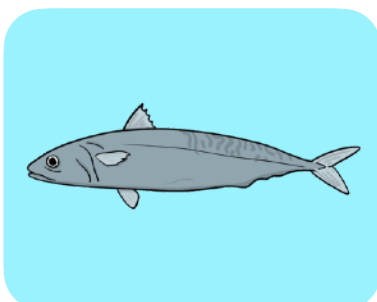
- Milk, cheese and yogurt.



- Green leafy vegetables like broccoli or cabbage.



- Fruit, like oranges, satsumas and dried figs.



- Fish, like sardines.

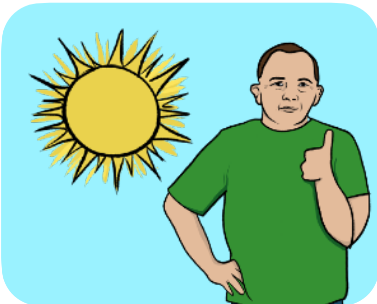
# Vitamin D



You can get vitamin D from sunlight.



You can also get it from tablets and some foods.



During the summer, you should go out into the sun every day for about 10 minutes.

Be careful not to burn.



You only need to show the skin on your face and arms.



During winter, you may need to take a tablet called a **vitamin D supplement**. You can get this from shops.

# Alcohol and smoking



If you smoke or drink too much alcohol, this can make it more likely that you get osteoporosis.



This makes it more likely that you will break a bone.



You can get support from your GP to drink or smoke less.



# Exercise for bones



Exercise can help your bones and muscles to stay strong.

There are 3 types of exercises that you can do to help your bones:



1. Exercises that keep your bones strong.

These include dancing, jogging, tennis, lifting weights, press-ups or sit-ups.



2. Exercises to help your balance.

These include dance, yoga, or exercises called **Tai Chi** or **Pilates**.



3. Exercises to keep your back muscles strong.

They can help you to keep your back straight and help with pain if you have a spinal fracture.

# My osteoporosis guide



You can use these pages to make notes about your osteoporosis.

## Main hospital or GP contact



This is the member of healthcare staff that you talk to the most about your osteoporosis.

Name:



How to contact them:

# Calcium and vitamin D



Write down how much calcium and vitamin D your doctor has said you should have:

milligrams (mg) of calcium  
a day

micrograms ( $\mu\text{g}$ ) of  
vitamin D a day



How will you get this much?



## Medicine

Write down the medicines that your doctor has said you should have and how to take them:



## Exercise, food and drink

Write down what you are going to try to do to stay healthy:

# More support for you



You can learn more about osteoporosis in our other booklet 'Healthy Living for Strong Bones'.

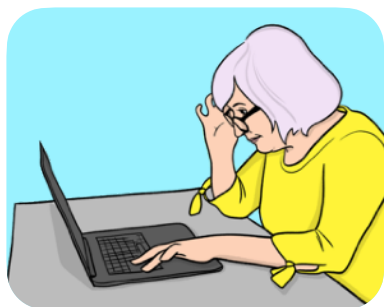


You can find more information and support on our website: [theros.org.uk](https://www.theros.org.uk)



Our nurses can support you and answer your questions about how to keep your bones healthy.





We have an online community if you would like to speak to other people with osteoporosis:

[www.theros.org.uk/online-community](http://www.theros.org.uk/online-community)

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