



The Delaware Office of **WOMEN'S HEALTH**

Osteoporosis: Cause and Prevention

Osteoporosis is the most common bone disease and is characterized by weakening of bone tissue, bone structure and strength, and may lead to increased risk of fractures. Osteoporosis, while common among older people, especially older women, is not inevitable. White and Asian women are most likely to have osteoporosis.

Other women at great risk include those who:

- Have a family history of broken bones or osteoporosis
 - Have broken a bone after age 50
- Had surgery to remove their ovaries before their periods stopped
 - Had early menopause
- Have not gotten enough calcium and/or vitamin D throughout their lives
 - Had extended bed rest or were physically inactive
- Smoke (smokers may absorb less calcium from their diets)
- Take certain medications, including medicines for arthritis and asthma and some cancer drugs
 - Used certain medicines for a long time
 - Have a small body frame



The risk of osteoporosis grows as you get older. At the time of menopause, women may lose bone quickly for several years. For some people, the first sign of osteoporosis is to realize they are getting shorter or to break a bone easily. Don't wait until that happens to see if you have osteoporosis. A bone density test will find out how strong your bones are. If you are over the age of 50 you should talk to your doctor about your risk factors and getting tested.

Meanwhile, there are things you can do at any age to prevent weakened bones, like eating foods that are rich in calcium and vitamin D. Regular weight-bearing exercise, such as weight training, walking, hiking, jogging, climbing stairs, tennis, and dancing is also important. Healthy lifestyle choices such as proper diet, exercise, and medications can help prevent further bone loss and reduce the risk of fractures. If lifestyle changes aren't enough talk with your doctor to see if you should take medicine to slow your bone loss, and help rebuild bone.

For More Information on Osteoporosis:

National Institutes of Health Osteoporosis and Related Bone Diseases National Resource Center: www.bones.nih.gov

National Osteoporosis Foundation: www.nof.org



You'll also want to learn how to fall-proof your home and change your lifestyle to avoid fracturing fragile bones. Visit <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/prevent-falls-and-fractures>



DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
Division of Public Health

The Office of Women's Health was created to increase the health knowledge for all Delaware women and engage them in leading healthier lives.