



---

## The Bone Thinner

One in four women over age 60 and nearly half of all people over 75 suffer from osteoporosis, the bone thinner. Osteoporosis is a major cause of fractures in the spine, hip, wrist, and other bones. It develops over a period of many years, but the cause is not fully known. Falling hormone levels, too little calcium in the diet, and a lifetime of inactivity all play a role. Osteoporosis may go unnoticed until there is a loss of height, the spine curves, or a fall results in a fracture. The following are some prevention and treatment tips:

- Consume foods that are high in calcium (lowfat cheese, yogurt, milk). Keep in mind, however, that some people – those who form kidney stones, for example – need to be careful about suddenly increasing their calcium intake.
- Make vitamin D a part of the diet, either by eating foods such as liver, fish, and egg yolk or by soaking in the mid-day sunshine.
- Exercise regularly. Activities such as walking, jogging, dancing, and biking are helpful because they place stress on the spine and the long bones of the body. Exercise may also strengthen muscles and help prevent falls.
- Women with risk factors (early menopause or family history) should ask their doctor about tests to measure bone mass and should discuss using an estrogen supplement.

*Information courtesy of the National Institute on Aging*