



Pharmacy Advisor® Program

# Specialized Bone Health Support



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# Bone Health and Your CVS Caremark Pharmacy Advisor Pharmacist

Managing your bone health can be a challenge, but you don't have to do it alone. Your CVS Caremark® Pharmacy Advisor Team is here to help. Your Team, including your Pharmacy Advisor pharmacist, can help you:

- Understand how your medication helps prevent bone loss and breaks
- Decrease your risk for falls
- Manage your medications and side effects to stay on track
- Set personalized treatment goals

Your Pharmacy Advisor pharmacist provides you with specialized support so you can focus on living a fuller, more active life. If you receive a call or letter that indicates that we need to speak to you, please call us at **1-866-624-1481**. For general questions about your prescription benefits, you should call the number on your prescription ID card or you can visit **Caremark.com**.





# Keys to Your Bone Health

Your body needs healthy, strong bones for many reasons. Bones:

- Hold us up and give us our shape
- Give us support and help us move
- Protect our organs
- Make blood cells
- Store calcium

To keep bones strong, your body breaks down old bone and replaces it with new bone tissue. Around 30 years of age, your bone mass stops increasing. The goal for bone health is to keep as much bone as possible for as long as you can. As people enter their 40s and 50s, more bone may break down than is replaced.

Bone problems can happen without any warning signs. People may not know they have weak bones until they break one. The good news is that it is never too late to take care of your bones. Follow these healthy lifestyle tips to keep your bones stronger.

- Eat foods rich in calcium and vitamin D
- Get plenty of exercise
- Stay at a healthy weight
- Take your medications as directed

Read on to learn more about bone health to keep your bones stronger and healthier.

# Know Your Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is a health condition where the body loses bone tissue faster than it can build it. This is called bone loss. Bone loss can cause bones to become weak and more likely to break. People with osteoporosis often break bones in the wrist, hip or spine. About one in two women and up to one in four men who are over 50 years of age will break a bone due to osteoporosis.

Osteoporosis can happen in both men and women at any age but it most often affects older women. Some risk factors include:

- Getting older
- Having a family history of osteoporosis
- Being a woman
- Being a white or Asian woman
- Having a small, thin body frame
- Taking certain medications for a long time
- Having certain medical conditions

While you can't control these risk factors, the good news is there are other factors you can control to help reduce or prevent bone loss. There is no cure for osteoporosis but there are things you can do to help prevent or slow down bone loss and improve your bone strength. And it's never too late to build stronger bones and prevent breaks.



Risk factors you can control include:

- **Exercise**—People who don't exercise regularly can have bone loss
- **Alcohol**—Alcohol stops the body from getting the calcium it needs to build strong bones
- **Smoking**—Smoking can weaken your bones
- **Lack of calcium, vitamin D, fruits, and vegetables**—You need the right amounts in your diet to keep your bones from becoming thin and weak
- **Too much meat, salt, and caffeine**—This causes your body to lose calcium

Bone tests can show how healthy your bones are. Based on the results, doctors will prescribe medications to help prevent or treat osteoporosis.

Read on to learn more about bone health. Learn how to protect your bones and prevent falls, broken bones, and pain.

# Understanding Your Medication

Most medications used to prevent or treat osteoporosis work by slowing bone loss. This helps your bones stay stronger. Your bone strength is called your bone density. The stronger your bones are, the less likely they are to break. Not only are broken bones painful, but they can keep you from doing the activities you enjoy most.

Taking your osteoporosis medication exactly as your doctor tells you can help you feel your best and prevent broken bones. Many medications used to treat or prevent osteoporosis must be taken on an empty stomach. Certain foods and medications may affect the way these medications work.

Talk to your doctor or Pharmacy Advisor pharmacist if you feel you are having side effects from your medication. They can give you tips on how to avoid these effects, the best time of day to take your medication, and foods to avoid when taking it.





### **Did you know?**

Some over-the-counter (OTC) medications can keep your osteoporosis medication from working the way it should. Be sure to tell your doctor and pharmacist about all the medications you take, including vitamins, herbal products, and OTC medications.



# Getting the Most from Your Medication

Many medications used to treat or prevent osteoporosis are taken once a week or once a month. This can make it difficult to remember to take it on time. But medications can best manage your health when they're taken exactly as prescribed. Never change or stop medications without talking to the doctor who prescribed them. Follow these tips to help stay on track.

## **Create a medication schedule that is easy to follow**

Work closely with your doctor(s), Pharmacy Advisor pharmacists and other providers to create an easy-to-follow medication schedule, including the best time to take your medication. Your health care provider can tell you if you should take your medication with or without food and which medications can be taken together or need to be taken separately. They can also give you advice on managing side effects, and what to do if you miss a dose.

## **Take medications as part of your routine**

Pick a day of the week or a day of the month to take your medication and stick with it. It's best to take medications at the same time(s). For example, take them after eating breakfast or brushing your teeth.



## **Use reminders**

- Set a standing alarm on your cell phone. For example, you can download the CVS Caremark mobile app from Google Play™ or Apple® iTunes® and set reminders.
- Post a sticky note where it can be seen easily. For example, on the bathroom mirror or refrigerator.
- Schedule tasks or appointments on your computer.
- Use a pill box or make a check-off chart.

## **See your health care team regularly**

Make and keep all your medical appointments, including visits to your health care providers, laboratory tests and procedures. Missing them could affect your treatment goals.

## **Join a support group**

Join an in-person or online support group like MyHealthTeams. Talking to others taking osteoporosis medications may help you cope with treatment and everyday challenges.

# Feeling Your Best

## **Fill your prescriptions through CVS Caremark Mail Service Pharmacy**

Getting all your medications from one pharmacy allows the pharmacist to have a more complete picture of your medication history. This helps the pharmacist to easily check for drug interactions and manage any side effects you may have.

## **Keep up with your refills**

Refilling your prescriptions on time is part of staying healthier. Start automatic refills\* through CVS Caremark Mail Service Pharmacy and your medications will be mailed directly to your home or anywhere you like. When a prescription expires or is out of refills, CVS Caremark will contact your doctor to request a new one.

## **Follow a healthy lifestyle**

In addition to taking your medication, stick to the following daily care activities:

- Learn all you can about bone health
- Keep up with your treatment goals
- Eat healthier
- Stay active
- Take actions to prevent falls



## Patient Profile

Ann sometimes forgot to take her bone loss pill on the same day each week. Ann talked to a Pharmacy Advisor pharmacist. She learned about reminders like:

- Stickers on her calendar
- Alerts on her cell phone

Now Ann always takes her pill on the same day each week.



### Did you know?

Your body can get more calcium from food than it can from supplements.

And this means stronger bones.

Talk to your doctor or Pharmacy

Advisor pharmacist for more tips on

how to get most of your calcium from the food you eat.

## Taking Care of Your Bones

People used to think bone loss was just part of getting older. Now we know you don't have to lose bone. You can help keep your bones strong by eating the right foods and exercising. You are never too young or too old to get healthy and get stronger bones. You can feel good and stay active when you take care of your bones and health.

### Choose the right foods

What type of food, how much and when you eat all affect your bones and the way your medication works to help strengthen them. Making healthy food choices can go a long way in helping to prevent or manage bone loss.

Eat a healthy, well-balanced diet with the right amount of calcium and vitamin D to help your body build and keep stronger, healthier bones.

- **Calcium** is a mineral the body needs to build and protect bones. Many people don't get enough calcium in their diet. So, the body takes the calcium it needs from the bone. This causes bone loss.



- **Vitamin D** helps your body use calcium. Vitamin D is in some foods you eat. Your body also makes vitamin D when you spend time in sunlight.

Foods High in Calcium	Foods High in Vitamin D
Milk (non-fat, reduced-fat, whole)	Milk (non-fat, reduced-fat, whole)
Yogurt	Yogurt
Cheese	Cheese
Ice cream	Eggs
Leafy greens (spinach, kale, collard greens)	Soy milk
Broccoli	Mushrooms (shiitake, button)
Fish: salmon, sardines (with bones)	Liver, beef
Beans: white, navy, soy (including tofu)	Fish: salmon, tuna, sardines
Seeds: sesame, flax, chia	Cod liver oil

Calcium and vitamin D are also added to foods like juice, breakfast cereal, soy or rice milk, and bread. Read food labels to see if calcium or vitamin D has been added. For more information about the nutritional value of foods, visit the U.S. Department of Agriculture website at [www.cnpp.usda.gov](http://www.cnpp.usda.gov).

How much calcium and vitamin D do people need each day? The National Osteoporosis Foundation (NOF) suggests that most women aged 50 and older should get at least 1,200 mg of calcium and 800 to 1,000 IU of vitamin D each day. Your doctor may suggest supplements to help you get the amounts you need. Ask your doctor how much calcium and vitamin D you need each day. Your Pharmacy Advisor pharmacist can help too.



## Be active

Exercise helps keep your muscles and bones strong. Weak muscles and bones can lead to poor balance and falls. This is why you need to do certain exercises for the right amount of time each day.

Focus on activities that improve your balance, flexibility and strength. Aim for 30 minutes of a weight-bearing exercise (those in which your bones and muscles work against gravity) on most days of the week. Consider doing 30 minutes of resistance-strengthening exercises (those that use muscle strength) two to three days a week.

Some types of exercises commonly recommended include:

- Weight bearing—walking, jogging, playing tennis, dancing
- Resistance—free weights, weight machines, stretch bands
- Balance—tai chi, yoga

Ask your doctor which exercises are best for you. Always ask your doctor before you start a new exercise. Avoid things that put you at risk for falling down or breaking a bone.

## Stay at a healthy weight

Ask your doctor about the appropriate weight range for your age and height. Having a low weight or being overweight can cause problems for people at risk for or who have osteoporosis.

# Preventing Falls

Preventing falls is an important part of managing your bone health. If you have osteoporosis and you fall down, you're more likely to break a bone. Broken bones are not only painful, they can keep you from doing the activities you enjoy most. Follow these tips to help prevent falling down and breaking a bone.

## **To prevent falls indoors:**

- Keep your home lit up, especially stairs; try using nightlights
- Avoid walking in socks, stockings or slippers
- Keep things you use most nearby or in places that are easy to reach
- Secure and use handrails along stairways
- Keep floors clear. Remove anything you could trip over, like cords, books, clothes, and shoes
- Remove small throw rugs or use double-sided tape to keep the rugs from slipping
- Install bars or handles in the bathroom next to the toilet and in the tub or shower
- Use nonslip mats in the bathtub and on shower floors
- Clean up spills right away

## To prevent falls outdoors:

- Always wear your glasses or contacts.
- Wear shoes with rubber soles and low heels
- Keep your porch, deck, walkways, and driveway free of leaves, snow, trash, or clutter
- Turn on the light outside your door before leaving for the night
- Use a walker or cane as needed
- Walk on grass when sidewalks are slippery
- Stop at curbs and check the height before you step down



### Patient Profile

Bob eats right. He also takes medication for bone loss. But Bob didn't know he wasn't doing enough to protect his bones until he fell and broke his hip. Bob talked to his doctor and learned he needed to be more active. Exercise makes bones and muscles stronger. Now Bob walks when he can and uses resistance bands at home to keep muscles strong. Bob is stronger and has better balance. This will help prevent falls.

# Resources

The following websites can help you better understand and manage your bone health. They provide information on the latest bone-related health news. Plus, get tips on diet, exercise and more.

- National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases | [www.niams.nih.gov](http://www.niams.nih.gov)
- National Osteoporosis Foundation | [www.nof.org](http://www.nof.org)
- National Institute on Aging | [www.nia.nih.gov](http://www.nia.nih.gov)
- CVS Caremark | [www.caremark.com](http://www.caremark.com)
  - Schedule or request a refill
  - Start automatic refills\*
  - View your prescription records

If you do not want to receive any more communications about this program from CVS Caremark, please call **1-866-624-1481**.

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This information is not a substitute for medical advice or treatment. Talk to your doctor or health care provider about this information and any health-related questions you have. CVS Caremark assumes no liability whatsoever for the information provided or for any diagnosis or treatment made as a result of this information.

\*Your refill will be mailed to you automatically before your refill due date, without any service, shipping or handling charges. Any copay or coinsurance will be charged at that time, unless you cancel the order. We will alert you before your prescription is refilled or renewed. To cancel, you must notify us by calling the toll-free Customer Care number on your prescription ID card or notify us. You will have at least 10 days to cancel the order. If we do not provide you with at least 10 days to cancel, we will accept a return of the order and issue a full refund, including postage. To cancel your enrollment in automatic refill at any time, call us or notify us at [www.caremark.com](http://www.caremark.com). Automatic refill is available for most common maintenance medications for chronic conditions or long-term therapy. Not all mail service prescriptions are eligible. Medications such as controlled substances, specialty drugs and prescriptions covered by certain government payers, including Medicare Part B, are not part of this program.

CVS Caremark does not operate the websites/organizations listed here, nor is it responsible for the availability or reliability of their content. These listings do not imply or constitute an endorsement, sponsorship or recommendation by CVS Caremark.

Your privacy is important to us. Our employees are trained regarding the appropriate way to handle your private health information. Patient stories are represented for illustrative purposes only. Any resemblance to an actual individual is coincidental. All data sharing complies with applicable firewall and privacy laws.

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## Take Control of Your Health

- ✓ Create a medication schedule
- ✓ Take your medication as part of your routine
- ✓ Use reminders to help you stay on track
- ✓ Call a CVS Caremark Pharmacy Advisor pharmacist anytime with questions
- ✓ Start automatic refills\*
- ✓ Keep your medical appointments
- ✓ Stay at a healthy weight
- ✓ Eat a bone-healthy diet
- ✓ Get active
- ✓ Prevent falls
- ✓ Learn more about your bone health

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## Control the Cost of Your Medication

**CVS Caremark** understands that the cost of medication can add up. We can help you with these costs so that the expense of your medication does not prevent you from taking care of your bones. Some ways you might be able to save money include ordering a 90-day supply of your medication or choosing generics when possible. Generics work the same as brand-name medications, but often cost less.

For more information on ways to save, visit **Caremark.com**. You can also call the toll-free number on your member ID card.

