

## How can I maintain healthy bones?

### Talk to your doctor about:

- getting enough calcium and vitamin D
- the best type of exercise for keeping bones healthy, improving coordination and balance, and preventing falls
- a bone mineral density (BMD) test
- checking your vision and hearing (poor vision and hearing can increase the risk of having a fall)
- the benefits and side-effects of all your medicines, particularly those that may affect your balance or eyesight.

### Limit alcohol

- Excessive alcohol intake increases the risk of falls and osteoporosis.

### Stop smoking

- Smoking causes greater bone thinning.

## Looking for more information?

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about healthy bones.

Visit Osteoporosis Australia website  
[www.osteoporosis.org.au/](http://www.osteoporosis.org.au/)

or call Osteoporosis Australia toll free number 1800 242 141

## Veterans' MATES

[www.dva.gov.au/health/veteransmates](http://www.dva.gov.au/health/veteransmates)

### Provided by:

University of South Australia  
Quality Use of Medicines and Pharmacy Research Centre

### In association with:

Discipline of General Practice, The University of Adelaide  
Discipline of Public Health, The University of Adelaide  
Repatriation General Hospital, Daw Park  
National Prescribing Service  
Australian Medicines Handbook  
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## Veterans' MATES

# Osteoporosis Looking after your bones

Get the best from  
your medicines





## What is osteoporosis?

When bones lose calcium, they become fragile and brittle. This is called osteoporosis.

Brittle and fragile bones can break more easily. Even a minor bump or fall can cause a serious fracture.

Both women and men can be affected by osteoporosis.

## Could I have osteoporosis?

Answer these 9 questions<sup>1</sup>. If you answer 'yes' to any of them, talk to your doctor about osteoporosis.

A 'yes' answer to any question does not mean you have osteoporosis. It does mean that you are more likely to have osteoporosis than those who answer 'no' to all questions.

<sup>1</sup>Questions adapted from *Stop the next fracture: Consumer Guide – managing osteoporosis*. Produced by Osteoporosis Australia



1. Do you think you have shrunk in height?  
Yes  No
2. Are you thin with a small frame?  
Yes  No
3. Do you have a family history of osteoporosis?  
Yes  No
4. Have you had sudden, severe unexplained back pain?  
Yes  No
5. As an adult, have you broken a bone after a minor bump or fall?  
Yes  No
6. Have you become hunched over in the top and middle part of your spine?  
Yes  No
7. Do you stay out of the sun most of the time?  
Yes  No
8. Does your diet lack calcium?  
Yes  No
9. Do you sit most of the day and rarely exercise?  
Yes  No



## How is osteoporosis diagnosed?

Your doctor will review your medical history to help determine your risk of getting osteoporosis.

Your doctor may then recommend a bone mineral density (BMD) test which is a quick and painless scan.

## What if I have osteoporosis?

The good news is osteoporosis can be treated.

Healthy diet and lifestyle are the first steps. Effective medications are also available for treating osteoporosis.

Your doctor will recommend the best treatment for you.

