

Osteoporosis

An Easy Read guide about osteoporosis for people with intellectual disability

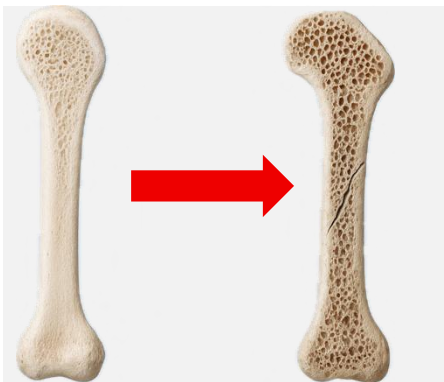


About osteoporosis



Osteoporosis is a **health condition**.

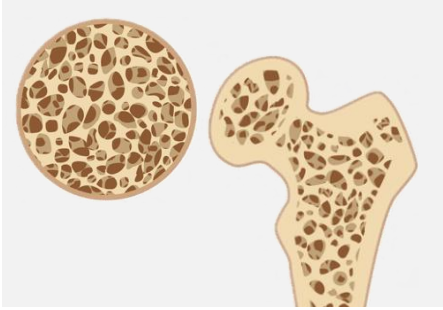
A **health condition** is something that affects your body or mind and how it works.



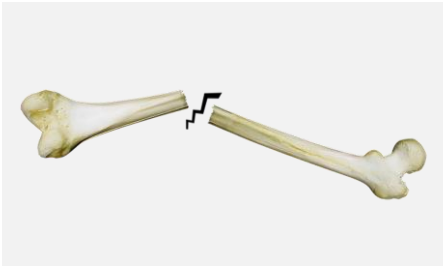
Osteoporosis is when your bones get weak.



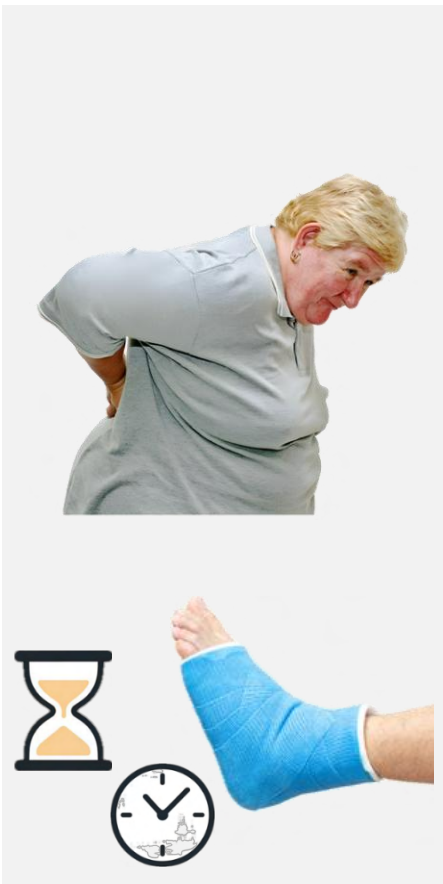
Healthy bones are thick and have small holes inside them.



Bones with osteoporosis are thinner and have bigger holes that make them weak.



Weak bones can break more easily.



Broken bones because of osteoporosis can

- make you feel a lot of pain
- take a long time to get better

People who might get osteoporosis



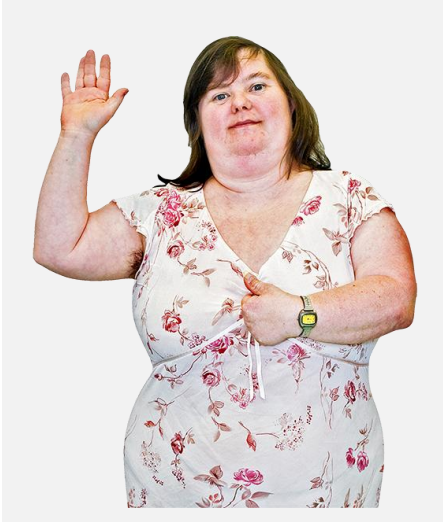
Anyone can get osteoporosis.



Women get osteoporosis more than men.



Most people get osteoporosis after they turn 50 years old.



People with intellectual disability can get osteoporosis when they are younger.

Some people with intellectual disability get osteoporosis in their 30s or 40s.



Osteoporosis is more common for people with Down syndrome and other intellectual disabilities.

What makes you more likely to get osteoporosis



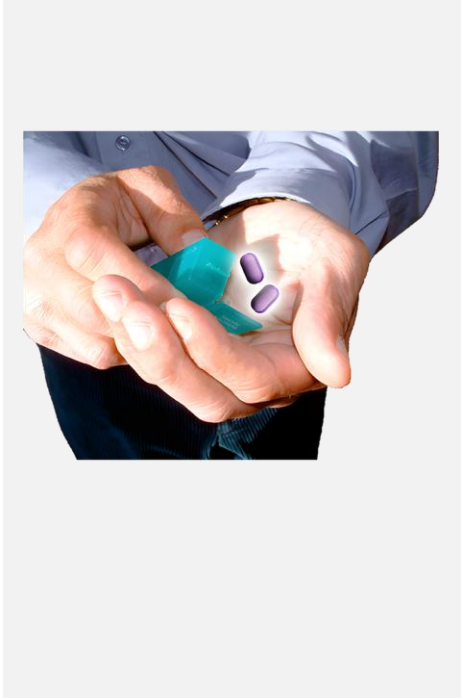
Some things that put you at risk of getting osteoporosis are



- If your family members have osteoporosis



- If you are too thin



- If you take some types of medication.

Some medications for **epilepsy** can cause osteoporosis.

Epilepsy is a health condition that affects the brain.



- If you do not get enough **calcium** from your food.

Calcium helps you have healthy bones and teeth.

You can get calcium from food like milk, cheese, nuts and small fish such as sardines.

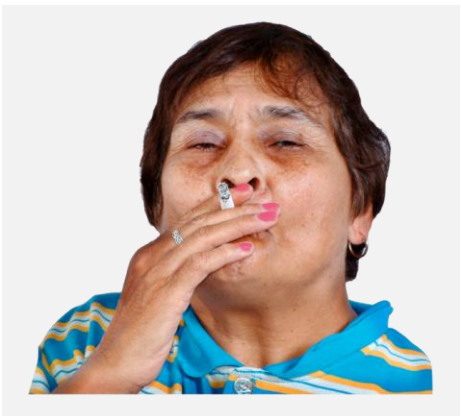


- If you do not get enough **Vitamin D.**

Vitamin D helps to keep calcium in your body.



You can get vitamin D from being in the sun.



- Smoking



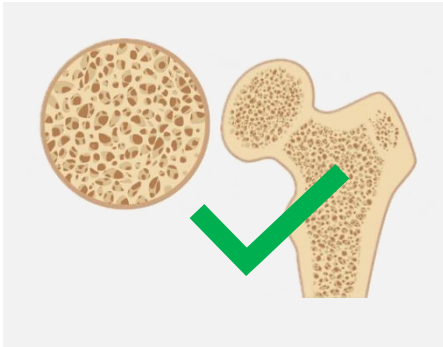
- Drinking too much **alcohol**

Alcohol is found in things like wine and beer.



- Not doing enough exercise

Keeping your bones healthy



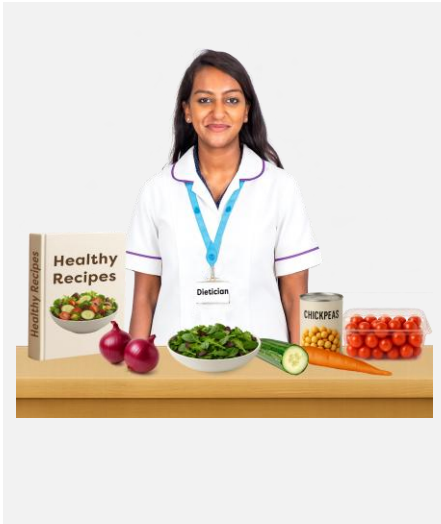
You can do things to try to keep your bones healthy and strong.

You can



1. Eat food with calcium like

- milk
- cheese
- yoghurt
- nuts
- beans
- small fish like sardines



You can ask a **dietician** to help you plan what to eat.

A **dietician** is a health worker who helps people eat the right food for their body.



2. Spend more time outdoors to get more Vitamin D.



It is important to be safe in the sun.

Wearing a hat and using sunscreen are some ways to be safe in the sun.



3. Stop smoking



4. Drink less alcohol



5. Exercise most days of the week

Some exercises that help bones are

- running
- dancing
- lifting weights



Talk to your doctor, **physiotherapist** or **exercise physiologist** to find out what exercise is right for you.

Physiotherapists and **exercise physiologists** are health workers who know a lot about exercise.



You can ask the people who support you to help you do these things.



You can also ask them to support you to go to the doctor or to see other health workers.

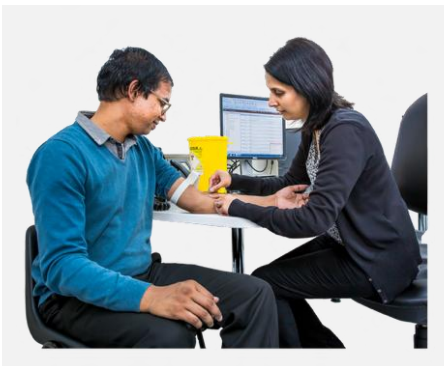
Checking for osteoporosis



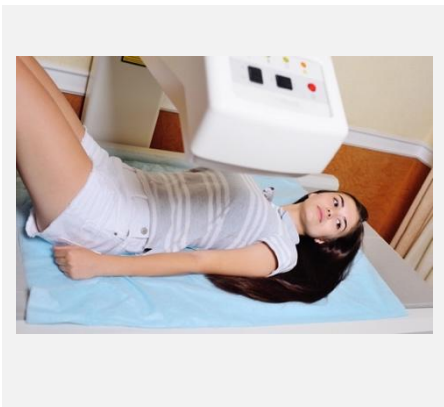
You should go to the doctor at least once a year for a health check.



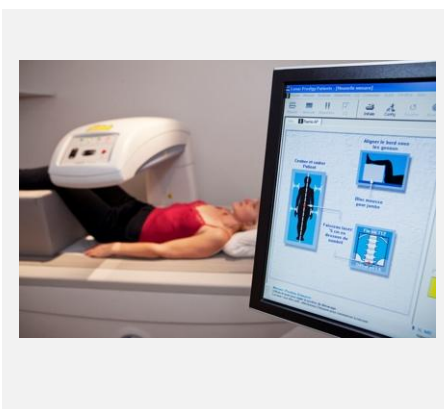
The doctor can help you do tests to check if your bones are healthy.



You might need to do a blood test to check for things that affect your bones.

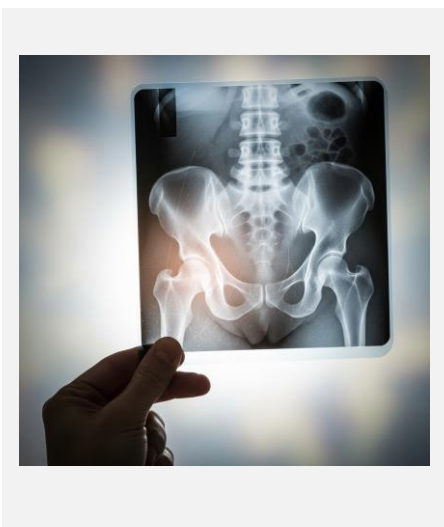


You might also need to do a scan called a **bone density scan**.



A **bone density scan** is sometimes called a DEXA scan.

They are the same thing.



The scan is a type of **X-ray** that shows if your bones are weak or strong.

An **X-ray** takes pictures of your bones.



Some people may do a different scan.



Your doctor will let you know what tests you need to do.

The National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health made this Easy Read document.

The information was written in December 2025 by Madison Booth, Bryana Fochesato and Jenna Zhao.

A group of people with intellectual disability reviewed this document.

No changes can be made without asking the National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health.

You can email the National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health at nceidh@unsw.edu.au.

This Easy Read document gives general information only. It is not the same as medical advice.

Always talk to a doctor or health worker for help with your health.

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