

# Bone Health & Osteoporosis

## OUTREACH TOOLKIT



Dear Friends:

While millions of Americans are suffering the crippling and debilitating consequences of bone diseases, like osteoporosis, many more are at risk for bone disease, low bone density and fractures. An estimated 10 million Americans over the age of 50 have osteoporosis (the most common bone disease), while another 34 million have osteopenia, or low bone mass. Each year, an estimated 1.5 million people suffer an osteoporosis-related fracture—an event that often leads to a downward spiral in physical health and quality of life. In fact, 20 percent of senior citizens who suffer a hip fracture die within one year. This problem affects men and women of all ethnicities, and is only going to get worse if we don't do something about it today. That is why I released the first-ever Surgeon General's report on bone health and osteoporosis.

As Surgeon General, it is my job to provide Americans with the best scientific information available on health. Right now, one in two women over 50 are expected to suffer a fracture due to osteoporosis during their lives. Due to the aging baby boomers, if we do not take immediate action we will have many more people at risk in the next two decades. It is vital that Americans know how to prevent and treat bone disease and take action that can lead to better bone health. As the report outlines, there are simple steps that can be taken that go a long way toward better bone health.

America's bone health is everyone's responsibility. Critical to improving America's bone health are public-private partnerships. These partnerships can promote bone-health behaviors and support the early treatment of bone disease.

I encourage all facets of society to join together to promote bone health by increasing awareness, promoting lifestyle changes, and defining and implementing treatment options for people of all ages. To help national and community organizations who are committed to improving the health of Americans, the Office of the Surgeon General has developed this toolkit which includes materials to educate and promote good bone health to all Americans.

I hope that you will find these materials useful and will join me in the effort to inform Americans about this silent disease and what they can do to protect themselves.

Thank you.

Richard H. Carmona, M.D., M.P.H., FACS  
Surgeon General  
United States Public Health Service

## The Bone Health and Osteoporosis Outreach Toolkit

The Surgeon General's report, "Bone Health and Osteoporosis: A Report of the Surgeon General," urges Americans to improve and maintain healthy bones in order to reduce the growing number of men and women who are at risk for osteoporosis and poor bone health. The Surgeon General calls for national action on bone health and encourages individuals and communities (clinicians, hospitals, extended care facilities, health plans and insurers, public health and government agencies, organizations, and businesses) to join together to promote bone health by increasing awareness, promoting lifestyle changes, and defining and implementing treatment options for people of all ages.

The *Bone Health and Osteoporosis Outreach Toolkit* provides information and tools to promote bone health to the media and to the community. The kit has three sections:

- 1. Media Outreach** will help you develop and implement a strategy for publicizing the Surgeon General's report and the importance of bone health in your community. This kit includes tools to assist you in getting the attention of radio, print, and television media.
- 2. Community Outreach** provides non-media strategies for educating the community about bone health and includes templates to use in this effort, including a PowerPoint presentation.
- 3. Resources** includes a series of fact sheets on the definition and scope of bone disease, steps individuals and health care professionals can take to improve bone health, and a call for national action from the Surgeon General. The fact sheets can be duplicated and distributed at events and locations such as health fairs, medical offices, community centers, and schools.

The materials in this toolkit and a template PowerPoint presentation are available for download at [www.surgeongeneral.gov](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov). A free publication, called a "People's Piece," all about bone health is available from the Surgeon General. To order the "People's Piece, call toll free 1-866-718-BONE or visit [www.surgeongeneral.gov](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov).

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# MEDIA OUTREACH



# Bone Health & Osteoporosis

## Developing Your Media Plan

Generating television, print and radio news coverage is an excellent way to educate Americans about bone health. There is a range of media outreach options available, depending on your time and resources. Following is a sampling of options to consider:

- **News Conference:** A news conference provides an opportunity to reach television, radio and print outlets and often yields the greatest coverage. In planning a news conference, always keep the following in mind:
  - **News Hook:** *Why should a reporter cover your story? What is **new** news about this issue?*

The release of the Surgeon General’s report is **new** news. Keep in mind that your local outlets may have already picked up the story from the national release. However, you may wish to generate ongoing coverage about the issue. In this case, your goal will be to develop a local angle to the story to generate additional media coverage on this important issue. You may want to consider:

    - Announcing a new campaign that your community is undertaking to improve bone health.
    - Hosting a health and information fair (or a series of them) in conjunction with your news event with information about osteoporosis and free bone density screenings for at risk patients.
    - Gaining the participation of elected officials to declare a local “bone health day” in conjunction with your event.
    - Announce a partnership with a local corporation that is working to inform their customers and employees about the importance of bone health.
  - **Tools:** *What are you providing to help reporters tell the story?*

Let reporters know that fact sheets are available. Also consider whether there is someone reporters can interview, such as a physician or patient with osteoporosis. Visual “props” for television also make the story more interesting. Some ideas include a model of an osteoporotic bone, examples of high-calcium foods, and a patient having a bone density test.
- **Media Outreach:** While a news conference is likely to generate the most widespread coverage, there are a number of less intensive media outreach strategies. These activities can be done in conjunction with a news conference or on their own.
  - **Opinion-Editorial (op-ed):** The op-ed page is one of the most widely read sections of a newspaper. Identify a well-respected member of the community, such as a doctor who specializes in bone health or the head of a professional association, and ask him or her to author an op-ed. Op-eds should only be sent to one newspaper at a time.
  - **Letter to the Editor (LTE):** If you are unlikely to get an op-ed printed, or if you have a second newspaper in your community, mail, e-mail or fax a letter to the editor about the importance of bone health. Encourage community partners to do the same.

- ***Drop-In Article:*** Many community papers, local organizations such as professional associations, and places of worship will print an article about topics of interest. Compile a list of targets and send them a prepared article that they can “drop-in” to their publications. These types of weekly/monthly publications usually need the article two weeks in advance.

# Media Pitching 101

## How do you prepare to pitch?

Compile a media list of the newsroom staffers or beat reporters/producers that cover health in your community. Be familiar with the pitch points or the main ideas that tell your story as well as why reporters should cover the story and the tools you have to offer them.

**IMPORTANT:** Be prepared to adapt your pitch to each individual reporter.

## When do you pitch the media?

Begin reaching out to the media as soon as the news advisory is finished and your media list is prepared. Ideally, you will begin your pitch four days to one week before the event. Here are the steps:

- **Send out the advisory:** E-mail or fax the advisory based on the reporter's preference.
- **Respect reporters' deadlines:**
  - **Print:** It is best to call a newspaper's newsroom between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. At this time, reporters are most likely to be available because the morning planning meeting is over and they are not yet working against a 5 p.m. deadline.
  - **Television:** Planning editors or assignment editors generally take calls between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., but not during the hour before a noon newscast. It is best to call the assignment desk after the morning planning meeting, which usually ends between 9:30 and 10 a.m. Remember to describe the story's visual elements.
  - **Radio:** The best time to call is early—between 7:30 and 8:30 a.m. After that, the staff goes into planning meetings. You can start calling again after 10 a.m. News directors, reporters and producers are often gone by the afternoon.

**Tip:** Don't call during a big news story or when reporters are on deadline.

- **Make the initial phone call:** Follow up with a phone call, but don't be surprised if you are asked to send the advisory again.

**Tip:** Don't call to ask if a fax was received. Be prepared to call the reporter and sell your story in a concise way. Remember that your story is worth the reporters' time. Be enthusiastic.

- **Be persistent:** Call back if you do not get in touch with the reporter right away. If you must leave a message, do so, but be sure to call again if the reporter does not call you back.

**Tip:** Don't leave a long phone message with your phone number at the end. Leave your name and number immediately after your brief pitch. Repeat the number at the end to make it easier for a reporter to write it down.



- ***Be thorough:*** Often it takes multiple calls before you identify the right person. If you have left repeated voice and e-mail messages and the contact has not called you back, try somebody else in the newsroom.

**Tip:** Don't pitch two reporters at the same news outlet at the same time.

- ***Be creative:*** Once you have found the right person at an outlet, be creative and come up with different angles to encourage them to cover the event. Offer to send supporting documents that are being released prior to the news conference.

**Tip:** If an outlet does not cover the event, follow up with them afterwards by sending a press kit or offering an interview. They can still cover the story!

## How to Develop Media Lists

To get the best coverage for your story, you will need a current list of reporters, editors, columnists and producers who cover health issues in your community. Listed below are easy guidelines for developing your list.

- **Identify local TV and radio stations**, local daily and weekly newspapers, and magazines. To find them, look in:
  - Local Yellow Pages
  - U.S. Newspaper List Web site at [www.usnpl.com](http://www.usnpl.com), *Bacon's Media Yellow Book* or *News Media Yellow Book*, which can be found at your local library.
- **Call each outlet** to determine the appropriate media contact. Look for the assignment person and reporters who cover the health “beats.”
- **Compile a list** with the name, beat or title, phone and fax numbers, and e-mail address for each outlet. Include information about the best method (phone, fax, or e-mail) and preferred time to contact each person.
- **Other people to contact:**
  - **Print:** 1) health editors/writers; 2) columnists who have an interest in health care issues; 3) editorial page editors
  - **TV:** 1) planning editors; 2) assignment editors; 3) reporters/on-air personalities; and 4) producers of specific shows like morning shows or community programs
  - **Radio:** 1) news directors; 2) assignment desk staff; 3) public affairs show hosts and/or producers; and 4) on-air personalities
- **Include smaller media outlets** on your list such as local cable access TV, community newspapers, and local health magazines and tabloids.
- **Seek out the local bureau of the Associated Press (AP)** wire service and add the bureau chief or assignment editor to the list. To learn more about contacting the AP bureau in your community, go to <http://www.ap.org/pages/contact/contact.html>.

## Template Pitch Points

The following pitch points are based on the national release of the Surgeon General's Report. Once you solidify your local news hook, you should tailor these pitch points for your media pitch. This includes adding in additional information about your local news hook as well as any prominent spokespersons you are featuring at your event.

- My name is [NAME] – and I am calling about a new report **on bone health and osteoporosis**. Do you have a minute to talk?
- On Thursday, October 14, the Surgeon General released “Bone Health and Osteoporosis: A Report of the Surgeon General,” the first-ever Surgeon General’s report on the topic of bone health. The report presents the risks to bone health for all age groups and outlines what everyone must do to have healthy bones.
- The Surgeon General’s report details the extent of declining bone health in America including:
  - Number of Americans who will have bone disease by the year 2020 if the country does not take action
  - Types of bone disease (including osteoporosis, the most common bone disease)
  - How bone disease affects the sense of health and well-being
  - Why bone disease is a growing health problem in this country
  - Societal and individual cost of bone disease
- The report also gives a prescription for changing this negative health trend. There are specific actions that individuals and communities can take, including nutrition, physical activity, check-ups and screenings with a health care professional.
- There’s a misconception that only older people, especially women, get bone disease. That isn’t the case. It can affect younger people, all ethnic groups, and both genders.
- Bone health begins in childhood and continues throughout life.
- Does this sound like a story you might be interested in covering?
- Would you be interested in speaking with a local health care professional who is an expert on bone health or a patient who has osteoporosis?

# How to Write a Press Release

## **Overview**

The press release is the most important and widely used tool in media outreach. This is the tool that helps you get into the newspaper, or on the radio or television. The best press releases are written as though they are news articles to be run in a newspaper.

## **Headline**

The headline should be written in a compelling way—just like the headline of a newspaper story—so that the editor will notice it.

## **Date**

Always include a release date, which is typically the date that the release is being distributed to the press.

## **Contact Information**

Always include contact information so reporters can track you down if they have questions. Be sure to provide as much contact information as possible (e.g., direct line, cell phone, e-mail).

## **Status**

Status refers to the designation you put on the release that tells the reporter when they can use the information in the release. Usually, the release will say “FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE,” which means the information can be used immediately.

Every release should include a dateline, which tells the reporter the city and state from which the release is being distributed.

## **The Lead**

- The body of the release contains the news you are releasing, quotes, and supporting information. The first part of the body of a release is the lead. This is the most important element of the press release because it summarizes the news you are releasing. It is your opportunity to draw in the reporter and editor and get them interested in the remainder of the release. When you are writing a lead, these are the questions you should try to answer: WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY and HOW.
- “Why” is usually left out of the lead because it often takes time and space to explain. “Why” is usually answered later in the release through the quotes and details about “why” the issue is important to individuals and the public, i.e. “why” should the reader care about the topic.
- The rest of the release should contain a combination of quotes and supporting factual information.

## **Inverted Pyramid**

A big part of an editor’s job is to edit for content space. When editing for space, an editor edits from the bottom up. Therefore, it is important that you write your press release in what is referred to as an inverted pyramid style. This means that the information is arranged so that the

most important information appears first and subsequent information appears in descending order of importance.

### **Quotes**

Quotes are a very important part of a press release because they bring emotion to the issue and make the release more interesting. In addition, in a quote you can state opinion and editorialize, whereas in the body of the release you should only state the facts. Be sure to get sign-off from the person you are quoting before distributing the release.

### **Boilerplate**

- At the end of your release, you should include boilerplate information about your organization. This should be standard language that you always use to describe your organization and its work.
- Boilerplate information should be placed after the following citation: ###. This is an indication to the editor that the press release has ended.
- An example of a boilerplate description is as follows: “All HHS press releases, fact sheets and other press materials are available at <http://www.hhs.gov/news>.”

### **Copyediting**

Always have multiple people proofread your materials before you distribute them to the media.



## National Press Release

# HHS News

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



[www.hhs.gov/news](http://www.hhs.gov/news)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Thursday, Oct. 14, 2004

Contact: HHS Press Office  
(202) 690-6343

### **BY 2020, ONE IN TWO AMERICANS OVER AGE 50 WILL BE AT RISK FOR FRACTURES FROM OSTEOPOROSIS OR LOW BONE MASS**

*The Surgeon General issues first-ever report on nation's bone health*

U.S. Surgeon General Richard H. Carmona, M.D., M.P.H., F.A.C.S., warned today in a new report that by 2020, half of all American citizens older than 50 will be at risk for fractures from osteoporosis and low bone mass if no immediate action is taken by individuals at risk, doctors, health systems, and policymakers. This new report, "Bone Health and Osteoporosis: A Report of the Surgeon General" says that 10 million Americans over the age of 50 have osteoporosis, the most common bone disease, while another 34 million are at risk for developing osteoporosis. And each year, roughly 1.5 million people suffer a bone fracture related to osteoporosis.

This report is the first-ever Surgeon General's report on the topic of bone health. Osteoporosis and other bone diseases, such as Paget's disease and osteogenesis imperfecta can lead to a downward spiral in physical health and quality of life, including losing the ability to walk, stand up, or dress, and can lead to premature death.

"This report will shape the way we approach, talk, and act about bone diseases," HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson said. "The more we learn, the more we realize that so many diseases are preventable, from obesity, to many types of cancer, and now bone disease. I want to thank Dr. Carmona and all the scientists and researchers who worked on this report. I look forward to the impact this new information will make in the health of communities."

Other findings in the report include:

- About 20 percent of senior citizens who suffer a hip fracture die within a year of fracture.
- About 20 percent of individuals with a hip fracture end up in a nursing home within a year.
- Hip fractures account for 300,000 hospitalizations each year.
- The direct care costs for osteoporotic fractures alone are already up to \$18 billion each year. That number is expected to increase if action to prevent osteoporosis is not taken now.

"Osteoporosis isn't just your grandmother's disease. We all need to take better care of our bones," Dr. Carmona said. "The good news is that you are never too old or too young to

improve your bone health. With healthy nutrition, physical activity every day, and regular medical check-ups and screenings, Americans of all ages can have strong bones and live longer, healthier lives. Likewise, if it's diagnosed in time, osteoporosis can be treated with new drugs that help prevent bone loss and rebuild bone before life-threatening fractures occur."

According to the new report, osteoporosis is a "silent" condition because many Americans are unaware that their bone health is in jeopardy. In fact, four times as many men and nearly three times as many women have osteoporosis than report having the condition. One of the most dangerous myths about osteoporosis is that only women need to worry about bone health. Osteoporosis affects men and women of all races, and while bone weakness manifests in older Americans, strong bones begin in childhood.

The Surgeon General's report is a call for Americans to take action to improve and maintain healthy bones. The report includes recommendations on what Americans can do to decrease the likelihood of developing osteoporosis.

These recommendations include:

- Getting the recommended amounts of calcium and vitamin D. High levels of calcium can be found in milk, leafy green vegetables, soybeans, yogurt and cheese. Vitamin D is produced in the skin by exposure to the sun and is found in fortified milk and other foods. For individuals who are not getting enough calcium and vitamin D in the diet, supplements may be helpful. The average adult under 50 needs about 1000mg of calcium per day and 200 International Units (IU) of Vitamin D (one cup of vitamin D fortified milk provides 302 mg of calcium and 50 IU of Vitamin D).
- Maintaining a healthy weight and being physically active at least 30 minutes a day for adults and 60 minutes a day for children, including weight-bearing activities to improve strength and balance.
- Taking steps to minimize the risk of falls by removing items that might cause tripping, improving lighting, and encouraging regular exercise and vision tests to improve balance and coordination.

"I always worried about heart disease and cancer, but was never concerned about the health of my bones," said Abby Perelman, who is being treated for osteoporosis. "I wish I knew then what I know now -- that a healthy diet and physical activity can make bones stronger and healthier."

The report also calls on health care professionals to help Americans maintain healthy bones by evaluating risks for patients of all ages, recommending bone density tests for women over the age of 65 and for any man or woman who suffers even a minor fracture after the age of 50. In addition, the report calls on health care professionals to look for "red flags" that may indicate that someone is at risk, including people who are under 50 who have had multiple fractures, or patients who take medications or have a disease that can lead to bone loss.

"All health care professionals need to be aware of the early indicators of bone disease," said Dr. Lawrence Raisz of the University of Connecticut Health Center, one of the scientific editors of the report. "Many of my patients had no idea their minor fracture was an indication of

a larger problem. The health care system can do a better job of helping patients protect themselves from bone disease.”

In addition to the release of the report, the Surgeon General has published a companion “People’s Piece” specifically written for the American people. The magazine-style, full-color booklet offers ready-to-use information on how people can improve their bone health. This is the second People’s Piece that

Dr. Carmona has produced as part of his commitments to improving the health literacy of Americans and providing the best scientific information available in a way that everyone can understand and use to live longer, healthier lives. The first People’s Piece discussed the health consequences of smoking and was released in May 2004.

The free People’s Piece, *The 2004 Surgeon General’s Report on Bone Health and Osteoporosis: What It Means To You*, is available by calling toll free 1-866-718-BONE or visiting [www.surgeongeneral.gov](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov).

“Thirty years ago, doctors thought weak bones and osteoporosis were a natural part of aging, but today we know they are not. We can do a lot to prevent bone disease,” said Dr. Carmona. “Everyone has a role to play in improving bone health, and this report is a starting point for national action on bone health. Let’s get started by taking action today in homes, health care settings, and communities across our nation.”

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Note: All HHS press releases, fact sheets and other press materials are available at <http://www.hhs.gov/news>.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### 1. **Why has the Surgeon General issued a report on bone health and osteoporosis?**

The report on bone health was requested by the United States Congress and comes at a critical time. The bone health status of Americans is in jeopardy. Today, 10 million individuals over age 50 have osteoporosis, and 34 million more Americans are at risk for developing osteoporosis. If action is not taken now, by 2020, one in two Americans over the age of 50 will be at risk for fractures from osteoporosis and low bone mass. A primary message in the Surgeon General's report is that the bone health of Americans can be improved, but we must take action now.

### 2. **What is bone disease?**

Bone disease is a condition that damages the skeleton and makes bones weak and prone to fractures. Weak bones are not a natural part of aging. While strong bones begin in childhood, people of all ages can improve their bone health.

The most common bone disease is osteoporosis, which is characterized by low bone mass and deterioration of bone structure. Osteoporosis can be prevented, as well as diagnosed and treated. Low bone mass is when bones lose minerals, like calcium, that make them strong, and as a result, bones become weak and *fracture* easily. Fractures to weak bones typically occur from falling or other common accidents.

Other bone diseases include Paget's disease and osteogenesis imperfecta. Paget's disease affects older men and women, and causes skeletal deformities and fractures. Osteogenesis imperfecta is an inherited disorder that causes brittle bones and frequent fractures in children.

### 3. **Why are healthy bones important?**

A healthy skeletal system with strong bones is essential to overall health and quality of life. Strong bones support our body; protect our heart; lungs and brain from injury; and are the framework for muscles that allows us to move. Bones are also a storehouse for life-supporting minerals.

### 4. **Why are weak bones a problem?**

Osteoporosis and other bone diseases, such as Paget's disease and osteogenesis imperfecta, can lead to a downward spiral in physical health and quality of life including losing the ability to walk, stand, and dress. It can even lead to premature death. Weak bones can result in painful and debilitating fractures. Each year, 1.5 million Americans suffer a fracture because of weak bones. The most common breaks are of the wrist, spine and hip.

Hip fractures are by far the most devastating type of broken bone and account for almost 300,000 hospitalizations each year. Of hip-fracture patients: 20 percent die within a year of the fracture, and 20 percent end up in a nursing home within a year. Many become isolated, depressed or afraid to leave home because they fear falling.

### 5. **Is bone disease costly?**

Bone disease is costly for society and individuals with the disease. In the United States, care

for bone fractures from osteoporosis costs nearly \$18 billion each year. The cost from a hip fracture for one individual can be more than \$81,000 during their lifetime.

## **6. Who is at risk?**

Many Americans do not know that their bone health is in jeopardy. Osteoporosis is a silent disease until fractures occur. Four times as many men and nearly three times as many women have osteoporosis than report having the disease. The number of hip fractures in the United States could double or even triple by 2040. Bone disease affects women and men of all ethnicities, although the risk of bone disease is highest among women. Bone disease is a real risk for any man or woman at any age.

## **7. How is osteoporosis prevented?**

*Physical activity.* Nearly half of all Americans do not get enough physical activity to strengthen their bones. Children and teens should get at least an hour of physical activity every day. Jumping rope, running, skateboarding, and riding bikes are enjoyable activities that also build strong bones. Adults should get at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity every day. Simple activities like walking and stair climbing will strengthen bones.

*Healthy diet.* The average American eats far too little calcium and vitamin D for good bone health. High levels of calcium can be found in milk, leafy green vegetables, soybeans, yogurt, cheese, and fortified orange juice. Vitamin D is produced in the skin by exposure to the sun and is found in fortified milk and other foods. For those individuals not getting enough calcium and vitamin D in the diet, supplements can be helpful.

*Bone mineral density test.* Women over 65, anyone who has a fracture after age 50, and others with significant risk factors should get a bone density test. Bone density tests use x-rays or sound waves to measure the strength of the bones. Bone density tests are safe, painless, and quick, and indicate the health of bones. Check with your health care professional about your risks and find out if you need a bone density test.

## **8. Is falling part of aging?**

Falls are not just the result of getting older. Most falls can be prevented. But as you age, falls become more dangerous. Since poor bone health may result in painful and debilitating fractures, its important to keep bones strong *and* to prevent falling.

## **9. How are falls prevented?**

*Exercise Regularly.* Physical activity is one of the most important ways to reduce your chances of falling. Physical activity improves strength, balance and coordination.

*Improve home safety.*

- Remove things that may cause tripping.
- Remove all small rugs.
- Don't use step stools.
- Install grab bars.
- Use non-slip mats in the bathtub and shower.
- Use bright light bulbs.
- Add handrails and light in all staircases.



- Wear shoes with good support and non-slip soles

*Review your medicines with a health care professional.* Some medicines, or combinations of medicines, can result in drowsiness or light-headedness, which can lead to a fall. Include prescription and over-the-counter medications in your review.

*Request a vision examination.* Poor vision from an incorrect glasses prescription or a condition like glaucoma or cataracts may result in a fall.

#### **10. How are osteoporosis and other bone diseases treated?**

There are medicines that can be used to slow the breakdown of bone or stimulate the formation of bone so that the skeleton is stronger and the risk of fractures is reduced. This is particularly important if you have already had a fragility fracture because you are likely to have more fractures.

**Call toll free 1-866-718-BONE to order a free publication from the Surgeon General about bone health. For more information visit [www.surgeongeneral.gov](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov).**

#### ***Citation***

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Bone Health and Osteoporosis: A Report of the Surgeon General*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General, 2004.

## How to Write an Opinion-Editorial (Op-Ed)

The op-ed section of a newspaper allows readers to share their opinions and is an excellent way to reach Americans about the importance of bone health. Newspapers, especially in the larger cities, receive thousands of op-eds a day. Getting one placed can be challenging. The following tips will increase your chances of getting an op-ed placed.

- **Identify a well-known person to author the op-ed.** The more well known the person is, the easier it will be to get the op-ed placed, especially in larger publications.
- **Use the release of the Surgeon General’s report as a hook.** Tying your piece to an event, such as the release of the Surgeon General’s report or a local community event that is focused on bone health, makes the news relevant to your community and increases its the chance of a publication choosing to print your op-ed.
- **Keep it brief.** Newspapers have limited space and editors do not have the time to cut your op-ed down to size. In general, it should be 750 to 800 words.
- **Use simple language.** Remember your goal is to educate Americans about bone health. Most Americans are not policy experts, scientists, or health care professionals so the information needs to be presented in language they will understand.
- **Make a specific recommendation.** This is an opinion piece. State your opinion on what the country should be doing to improve bone health. Make sure that your opinion is based on facts and that you avoid advocacy.
- **Write persuasive prose.** Your first paragraph should draw the reader in by using a dramatic vignette or a well-stated argument. Use anecdotes and personal stories to help bring complicated issues to life. And make sure that your final paragraph is as persuasive as your first and summarizes your point in a cohesive manner.
- **Provide a next step.** Be sure to remind families and the community that they can find out more about bone health by ordering “The 2004 Surgeon General’s Report on Bone Health and Osteoporosis: What It Means to You.” People can call toll free 1-866-718-BONE to order this free publication from the Surgeon General about bone health. For more information, they can visit [www.surgeongeneral.gov](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov).
- **Follow up.** Most op-ed editors will respond to you within a week. If you have not heard back in that time frame, or if your piece is particularly time sensitive, you can make a follow-up phone call to be sure it was received and ask about its status.

Make sure your op-ed is double-spaced with wide margins. List your name, address, phone, fax, and e-mail contact information at the top of the opinion piece. Find out from your local paper the best way to make a submission. Instructions for submitting an op-ed are usually at the bottom of the page where they appear or on the paper’s Web site. Some newspapers like to receive them by mail, others prefer faxes, while others favor e-mail.

## How to Write a Letter to the Editor

Letters to the editor, which are found on the editorial pages of a newspaper, are one of the most widely read sections of the newspaper. By submitting a letter, you can alert people to the risks of osteoporosis and other types of bone disease and promote the U.S. Surgeon General's tips for bone health. Or, the letter can be used in response to an article, column, or op-ed that has just appeared in the newspaper. When writing a letter to the editor, follow these steps:

**Respond quickly by e-mail or fax (within three to five days).** You should respond to an editorial, article or commentary immediately after it is published in your local newspaper. If you are responding to an article, be sure to mention the title and date of the article you are responding to within your first two sentences. For example: "Dear Editor, Your recent coverage of [AFFILIATE NAME] ("Need for Education About Bone Health" October 15, 2004) was a thoughtful piece ..."

**Tie the letter to the release of the Surgeon General's Report or a local event.** Editors are interested in printing letters that relate to events happening in the community or to newsworthy developments, like recently passed legislation or a public hearing. While the Surgeon General's Report is an obvious connection, consider whether there are any other local connections.

**Be brief.** Generally, four to six paragraphs are ideal. If you cannot contain the piece to that length, consider asking someone to help you edit it or writing a 750-word op-ed instead.

**Make one clear argument.** The letter should be in favor of or critical of a particular position taken by the newspaper or described in an article or promote a particular issue – like bone health.

**Stay calm.** Use no more than one exclamation point per letter. Do not attack anyone personally. Stick to the facts and keep the letter respectful.

**Follow up.** If you have sent your letter to the editor and have not heard anything within a week, make a follow-up call to check on its status. Be aware that editors receive hundreds of letters and may not immediately respond to you.

You must include your name, address, and daytime phone number in your letter. Instructions for submitting a letter to the editor are usually at the bottom of the op-ed page, in the newspaper or on the paper's Web site. The instructions include information about whether they prefer the letters mailed, faxed, or e-mailed.

## Sample Letter-to-the-Editor (LTE)

[DATE]

### *Americans of ALL Ages Must Develop Good Bone Health Habits*

Dear Editor:

[REPORTER's]October [XX], 2004 article, ["TITLE OF ARTICLE"] focused on how pervasive bone disease really is and how it begins with the habits we develop in childhood. I urge your readers to take a look at the U.S. Surgeon General's new report on Bone Health and Osteoporosis released October 14, 2004.

U.S. Surgeon General Richard Carmona was directed by Congress to issue this report because of the alarming rise in the number of people with osteoporosis and low bone mass. If we as a country don't take immediate action to promote bone health, the current 10 million with osteoporosis and 34 million at risk will increase. Without changes, by 2020, half of all Americans over age 50 will have weak bones from osteoporosis and low bone mass.

There is so much we can do, community by community, such as getting the recommended amount of calcium and vitamin D through a healthy diet, being physically active for 30 minutes a day for adults and 60 minutes a day for children, and taking steps to reduce the risk of falling. Healthy bones begin in childhood. Children must be taught bone health measures just as they are taught to care for their teeth.

As a family practice physician in Cleveland, I am urging everyone to take action NOW. Our bone health depends on it!

Sincerely,

John Miller, M.D.  
1555 Main Street  
Cleveland, OH 90049  
XXX-555-2434  
john.miller@XYZ.org

## Template Newsletter Drop-In Article

According to a new report by the United States Surgeon General, by 2020, half of Americans over age 50 will be at risk for fractures from osteoporosis and low bone mass if no immediate action is taken by doctors, health systems, policymakers and those at risk. Currently, 10 million Americans over the age of 50 have osteoporosis, the most common bone disease, while another 34 million have low bone mass and are at risk. Each year, roughly one and a half million people suffer a bone fracture related to osteoporosis.

The findings were compiled in “Bone Health and Osteoporosis: A Report of the Surgeon General” the first ever Surgeon General’s report on bone health. Osteoporosis and other bone diseases, such as Paget’s disease and osteogenesis imperfecta, can lead to a downward spiral in physical health and quality of life including losing the ability to walk, stand and dress one’s self. It can even lead to premature death. One of the most dangerous myths about osteoporosis is that only women need to worry about bone health. In fact, osteoporosis affects men and women of all races, and while bone weakness manifests in older Americans, strong bones begin in childhood.

The Surgeon General’s report is a call for national action to improve and maintain healthy bones. The report includes recommendations on what Americans can do to decrease the likelihood of developing osteoporosis. These recommendations include:

- Get the recommended amount of calcium and vitamin D (high levels of calcium can be found in milk, leafy green vegetables, soy beans, yogurt and cheese; vitamin D is produced in the skin by exposure to the sun and is found in fortified milk and other foods). For individuals not getting enough calcium and vitamin D in the diet, supplements can be helpful.
- Maintain a healthy weight and be physically active, at least 30 minutes a day for adults and 60 minutes a day for children, including activities to improve strength and balance.
- Take steps to minimize the risk of falls by removing items that might cause tripping, improving lighting and encouraging regular exercise and vision tests to improve balance and coordination.

“Osteoporosis isn’t just your grandmother’s disease. We all need to take better care of our bones,” Dr. Carmona said. “The good news is that you are never too old or too young to improve your bone health. With healthy nutrition, physical activity every day, and regular medical check-ups and screenings, Americans of all ages can have strong bones and live longer, healthier lives. Likewise, if it’s diagnosed in time, osteoporosis can be treated with new drugs that help prevent bone loss and rebuild bone before life-threatening fractures occur.”

The report calls on health care professionals to emphasize bone health by evaluating risks for patients of all ages, recommending bone density tests for all women over the age of 65, anyone over the age of 50 with even a minor fracture and others with significant risk factors. Health care professionals should look for “red flags” that may indicate that someone is at risk, including people who are under 50 and have had non-traumatic fractures, or patients who take medications or have a disease that can lead to bone loss.

The Surgeon General has published a guide for consumers to improve bone health. The free guide is available by calling toll free 1-866-718-BONE or visiting [www.surgeongeneral.gov](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov).



# COMMUNITY OUTREACH



## Bone Health & Osteoporosis

## Developing a Community Outreach Plan

In addition to the media outreach options outlined in the first section of this toolkit, there are many other ways that organizations can get involved in educating Americans about the importance of bone health.

- Educate your members and other contacts on bone health using the fact sheets and “The 2004 Surgeon General’s Report on Bone Health and Osteoporosis: What It Means to You.”
  - E-mail the enclosed listserv message to your membership and others. The e-mail not only educates them about bone health, but it encourages them to inform others too.
  - Include a session on bone health on the agenda for any meetings your organization holds that include members or others who may benefit from increased knowledge about bone health.
  - Include the template drop-in article in your organization’s publications.
- Ask other community groups that have an interest in bone health or who reach your target audience to get involved with communicating the messages about bone health.
  - Interested organizations can do all the same things you did to reach your members, including sending out emails on their listservs, printing the drop-in article in their publications, and adding bone health to the agenda for their next meeting.
  - Form a “Healthy Bones” coalition. You will expand your reach by joining together with different groups in your community – health care facilities and providers (hospitals, clinics, physicians, nurses, extended care facilities), women’s groups, schools, churches and businesses. Once you get the coalition together, work together to figure out how best to reach your target audiences.
- Educate health care professionals and insurers about bone health and encourage them to incorporate osteoporosis screenings and education into the care of their patients.
  - Go on a speaking tour to educate health care professionals and health insurers about the importance of bone health. This could include speaking engagements at medical schools, medical association meetings, or one-on-one visits to the larger hospitals, clinics and doctors offices. The template PowerPoint should provide a great starting point!
  - Send a letter to doctors and other health care professionals in your community reminding them about the importance of bone health. Include the fact sheet designed for health care professionals and encourage them to hand out the fact sheets and “The 2004 Surgeon General’s Report on Bone Health and Osteoporosis: What It Means to You” to their patients as well as to hang up the poster on fall prevention.
  - Organize a seminar for health care professionals and health insurers.
- Educate your target audience and parents about bone health.
  - Hold a health fair that includes information about bone health, an assessment on the risks for osteoporosis and a bone density screening for those who are at risk.
  - Work with students, parents and teachers through the parent-faculty association to raise awareness about bone health through the classroom and information for parents.
  - Encourage schools to include information about bone health with information packets that go to parents.

- Hold or attend a seminar for schools nurses to educate them about bone health.
- Work with local businesses to get them to disseminate information about bone health to their employees and customers. For example, they could include information in their billing statements, and in store circulars and public service announcements (PSAs). Organizations with a natural tie-in such as pharmacies and gyms are the best starting point for forming a corporate partnership.

These are just some of the many ways that you can get involved to educate Americans about this growing crisis. Together, we can make a difference!

## Template Listserv

The Surgeon General's report, "Bone Health and Osteoporosis: A Report of the Surgeon General," urges Americans to improve and maintain healthy bones in order to reduce the growing number of men and women who are at risk for osteoporosis and poor bone health. The Surgeon General is calling for the nation to join together to promote bone health through increasing awareness, promoting lifestyle changes, and defining and implementing treatment options for people of all ages.

To help Americans answer the call, the Office of the Surgeon General has also developed free materials to facilitate media and community outreach efforts, including templates and fact sheets on bone health. All of these materials can be downloaded free of charge at [www.surgeongeneral.gov](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov). Here are just a few of the ways that you can join the effort to promote bone health.

**Media Outreach:** Generating television, print and radio news coverage is an excellent way to educate a large number of Americans about bone health. These are just a sample of possible media outreach opportunities:

- Host a news conference
- Submit an op-ed to your local newspaper
- Send a letter to the editor to another newspaper
- Draft a drop-in article for local professional associations and churches

**Community Outreach:** There are many ways that organizations can work directly with their communities to educate them about the importance of bone health. These are just a sample of possible community outreach opportunities:

- Ask other community organizations to get involved in your effort to raise awareness
- E-mail bone health information to your membership and other contacts
- Include a session on bone health on the agenda for any meetings your organization holds (a template PowerPoint presentation has been developed for your use)
- Include a drop-in article in your organization's publications
- Go on a speaking tour to educate health care professionals and health insurers
- Send a letter to doctors in your community reminding them about the importance of bone health
- Organize a seminar for health care professionals and health insurers
- Hold a health fair
- Work with students, parents and teachers to provide information through the schools
- Work with local businesses to get them to disseminate information about bone health to their employees and customers.

To learn more about bone health, please call toll free 1-866-718-BONE to order "The 2004 Surgeon General's Report on Bone Health and Osteoporosis: What It Means to You," a free publication that can be distributed to consumers or organizations. This can also be downloaded free of charge at [www.surgeongeneral.gov](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov). We look forward to working with you to increase the bone health of all Americans.



# RESOURCES



## Bone Health & Osteoporosis

# What Is Bone Disease?

**Bone diseases are conditions that result in the impairment of normal bone function and can make bones weak.**

- Weak bones should not just be excused as a natural part of aging.
- Strong bones begin in childhood.
- People of all ages can improve their bone health.

**The most common bone disease is osteoporosis.**

- Osteoporosis is characterized by low bone mass and deterioration of bone structure.
- Osteoporosis can be prevented, as well as diagnosed and treated.

**Low bone mass means that bones have less than optimal amounts of calcium and other minerals that make them strong.**

- As a result of low bone mass, bones become weak and break, or can *fracture* more easily.
- Bone fractures often occur from falling or other common accidents. Spine fractures can occur while doing daily activities without any trauma.

**Other bone diseases include Paget's disease and osteogenesis imperfecta.**

- Paget's disease causes skeletal deformities and fractures. It affects older men and women.
- Osteogenesis imperfecta is an inherited disorder that causes brittle bones and frequent bone fractures in children.

# Why Are Healthy Bones Important?

**A healthy skeletal system with strong bones is essential to overall health and quality of life.**

- Strong bones support us and are the framework for our muscles.
- Bones are a storehouse for vital minerals needed to live.
- Strong bones protect the heart, lungs, brain, and other organs from injury.

**Weak bones often result in painful and debilitating fractures.**

- Each year, 1.5 million Americans suffer a fracture because of weak bones.
- The most common breaks are of the wrist, spine, and hip.

**Hip fractures are the most devastating type of bone fracture and account for almost 300,000 hospitalizations each year. Of hip fracture patients:**

- 20 percent die within a year of the fracture.
- 20 percent end up in a nursing home within a year.
- Many become isolated, depressed, or afraid to leave home because they fear falling.

**Bone disease is costly for society and individuals with the disease.**

- Care for bone fractures from osteoporosis costs nearly \$18 billion each year.
- The cost of a hip fracture for one individual can be more than \$81,000 during their lifetime.

## Who Is at Risk?

**Many Americans do not know that their bone health is in jeopardy.**

- Osteoporosis is a silent disease until a fracture occurs.
- Four times as many men and nearly three times as many women have osteoporosis than report having the disease.

**An estimated 10 million Americans over the age of 50 have osteoporosis. Another 34 million have low bone mass.**

- If immediate action is not taken, half of all Americans over 50 will have weak bones from osteoporosis and low bone mass by 2020.
- This could cause the number of hip fractures in the United States to double or even triple by 2040.

**Bone disease affects women and men of all ethnicities.**

- The risk of osteoporosis is highest among women. It is higher in White and Asian women, but still occurs in Black, Hispanic, and American Indian and Alaska Native women.
- Bone disease is a risk for both men and women.

## How Do You Prevent Osteoporosis?

**Be physically active every day.**

- More than half of all Americans do not get enough physical activity to strengthen their bones.
- Children and teens should get at least an hour of physical activity every day. Jumping rope, running, skateboarding, and riding bikes are enjoyable activities that also build strong bones.
- Adults should get at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity every day. Simple activities like walking and stair climbing will strengthen the bones that are exercised.

**Eat a healthy diet.**

- The average American eats far too little calcium and vitamin D for good bone health.
- High levels of calcium can be found in milk, leafy green vegetables, soybeans, yogurt, cheese, and fortified orange juice.
- Vitamin D is produced in the skin by exposure to the sun and is found in fortified milk and other foods. For those individuals not getting enough calcium and vitamin D in the diet, supplements can be helpful.

<b>Calcium and Vitamin D Requirements</b>		
Age	Calcium (mg/day)	Vitamin D (IU/day)
0-6 months	210	200
6-12 months	270	200
1-3 years	500	200
4-8 years	800	200
9-18 years	1300	200
18-50 years	1000	200
51-70 years	1200	400
Over 70 years	1200	600
(A cup of milk or fortified orange juice has about 300 mg of calcium and 50 IU of vitamin D.)		

**Get a bone mineral density test.**

- All women over 65 and anyone who has a bone fracture after age 50 should get a bone density test.
- Others with significant risk factors should also get a bone density test.
- Bone density tests use x-rays or sound waves to measure the strength of the bones.
- Bone density tests are safe, painless, quick (5-10 minutes) and indicate the health of bones.

**Reduce the risk of falling.**

- Falls are not just the result of getting older. Most falls can be prevented.
- As you age, falls become more dangerous.

## How Do You Prevent Falls?

**Exercise regularly.**

- Physical activity is one of the most important ways to reduce your chances of falling.
- It makes you stronger, improves balance and coordination, and improves overall health.
- Activities like dancing and Tai Chi can be very effective.

**Make your home safe.**

- Remove things you can trip over.
- Remove all small rugs.
- Don't use step stools.
- Have grab bars installed.
- Use non-slip mats in the bathtub and shower.
- Use bright light bulbs.
- Add handrails and light in all staircases.
- Wear shoes with good support and non-slip soles.



**Ask a health care professional to review your medicines.**

- Some medicines, or combinations of medicines, can make you drowsy or light-headed, which can lead to a fall. Include prescription and over-the-counter medications in your review.

**Have your vision checked.**

- You may be wearing the wrong glasses or have a condition like glaucoma or cataracts that limits your vision.

**Call toll free 1-866-718-BONE to order a free publication from the Surgeon General about bone health. For more information visit [www.surgeongeneral.gov](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov).**

***Citation***

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Bone Health and Osteoporosis: A Report of the Surgeon General*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General, 2004.

# Myths and Realities of Bone Health

**Over several decades, scientists have learned a significant amount about the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of bone disease.** Our next and most critical step is to transfer this knowledge from the research laboratories to the general population.

**Myth: Only a small segment of the population suffers from osteoporosis or other bone diseases.**

**Reality:** Osteoporosis is a silent condition that affects millions of Americans. Ten million Americans over age 50 have osteoporosis, the most common bone disease. Another 34 million Americans have low bone mass. If we do not take immediate action, by 2020, half of all Americans over age 50 will have weak bones from osteoporosis and low bone mass.

**Myth: Osteoporosis is only a problem for older White women.**

**Reality:** One of the most dangerous myths about osteoporosis is that only women need to worry about bone health. Osteoporosis affects men and women of all races. While bone weakness is manifested in older Americans, strong bones begin in childhood. Americans of all ages must take steps to protect their bone health.

**Myth: Bone fractures from falls or injuries have nothing to do with osteoporosis.**

**Reality:** Fractures in individuals over the age of 50 can be the first sign of weak bones from osteoporosis or low bone mass. Each year, 1.5 million older Americans suffer a fracture due to bone disease.

**Myth: Diagnosing osteoporosis or other bone diseases is a lengthy and painful process.**

**Reality:** A bone density test, the primary test that is used to screen for osteoporosis, is a simple and painless procedure that takes less than 5-10 minutes to complete.

**Myth: Osteoporosis cannot be prevented.**

**Reality:** Individuals can do a lot to promote their bone health, beginning in childhood and continuing into old age. With proper nutrition, physical activity and medical attention, Americans can have strong bones and live longer, healthier lives.

**Myth: Once you get osteoporosis, nothing can be done to treat it.**

**Reality:** If diagnosed, osteoporosis can be treated with new drugs that help prevent bone loss and rebuild bone. These can help to prevent life-threatening and painful fractures.

**Myth: Osteoporosis and other bone diseases have no physical consequences.**

**Reality:** Osteoporosis and bone disease often result in painful and debilitating fractures. A fracture can lead to a downward spiral in physical and mental health that, for some people, can even result in death. The risk of death is especially high during the first year after the fracture. Many individuals with fractures experience significant pain, loss of height, and may lose their ability to dress themselves, stand up, and walk. Of those who remain independent, a fracture often leads to a reduced quality of life.

**Myth: There are no emotional consequences from osteoporosis and other bone diseases.**

**Reality:** Fractures may lead to a loss of self-esteem and body image, and a change in mood, all of which cause significant anxiety and depression. Individuals who have been immobilized by a fracture may fear they will fall again and suffer additional fractures.

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***Citation***

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Bone Health and Osteoporosis: A Report of the Surgeon General*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General, 2004.

# Tips to Improve Your Bone Health

With proper nutrition, physical activity, and regular check-ups and screenings, Americans can have strong bones and live longer, healthier lives. Here's how.

## **Eat foods rich in calcium and vitamin D.**

Calcium and vitamin D are important to your bone health. Learn about foods that are naturally high in calcium and vitamin D. Eat a balanced diet with a variety of fruits and vegetables, grains, and non-fat or low-fat dairy products. Sunshine is also a good source of vitamin D. If you are not getting enough calcium and vitamin D in your diet, supplements can be helpful.

## **Eat foods that are high in calcium.**

Milk, yogurt, cheese, canned salmon with bones, broccoli, canned sardines and fortified foods such as fruit juices, cereals, breads, and soy products are excellent sources of calcium.

## **Be physically active every day.**

Many types of physical activity contribute to bone health and also improve balance, coordination, and muscle strength. At least 30 minutes a day of weight bearing and strengthening physical activity is recommended for adults, and 60 minutes a day is recommended for children.

## **Maintain a healthy body weight throughout your life.**

Being underweight increases the risk of bone loss and fractures.

## **Protect yourself from falls.**

Fractures are often caused by falls. Protect your bones, especially if you are over the age of 60. Have your vision checked. Make your home safer by removing items you may trip over, being sure that you have enough lighting, wearing shoes with good support, and installing handrails.

## **Avoid smoking and limit alcohol intake.**

Smoking and heavy alcohol use reduce your bone mass and increase your risk for broken bones.

## **Discuss increased risks with your doctor.**

You may be at greater risk for fractures if you are older than 65, have broken a bone after age 50, have relatives with a broken bone, have certain medical conditions (for example, hyperthyroidism or arthritis) and take certain prescription medications (for example, thyroid medicine or oral glucocorticoids). Check with your health care professional about your risks and find out if you need a bone density test. Once you have the test, your health care professional may prescribe medications that treat bone disease and may recommend calcium or vitamin D supplements.

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### ***Citation***

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Bone Health and Osteoporosis: A Report of the Surgeon General*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General, 2004.

# How Can Health Professionals Improve Bone Health?

**Health care professionals have a critical role to play in helping their patients maintain strong, healthy bones throughout life.** Evaluating potential risk factors for bone disease and promoting bone-healthy behaviors is essential. The Surgeon General recommends that health professionals take the following steps to help keep America's bones strong:

- **Identify and treat individuals at high risk for osteoporosis or other bone disorders.** One of the most important signals that patients may have poor bone health is a previous fragility fracture or a family history of bone disease. Fractures start a downward spiral in health that can ultimately lead to severe disability or even death. This can potentially be avoided if at-risk individuals are identified and receive the necessary treatment in a timely manner.
- **Be familiar with indicators that warrant screening for osteoporosis.** Patients with the following indicators should be considered for a bone mineral density test:
  - All women aged 65 and over
  - Postmenopausal women under 65 with:
    - Family history of osteoporosis
    - Personal history of low-trauma fracture after the age of 50
    - Current cigarette smoking
  - Low body weight
  - Those who take medications that cause bone loss:
    - Oral glucocorticoids (steroids)
    - Cancer treatments (radiation, chemotherapy)
    - Excess thyroxine replacement
    - Antiepileptic medications
    - Gonadal hormone suppression
    - Immunosuppressive agents
  - Diseases that may lead to or aggravate osteoporosis
    - Hyperthyroidism
    - Chronic lung disease
    - Hyperparathyroidism
    - Cancer
    - Diseases that cause poor intestinal absorption
    - Chronic hepatic or renal disease
    - Cushing's disease
    - Multiple sclerosis
    - Rheumatoid arthritis
    - Endometriosis
    - Vitamin D deficiency
    - Sarcoidosis
    - Hemochromatosis

- **Assess patients' diet and lifestyle behaviors that affect bone health. Perform a bone density test on patients with multiple risk factors.** Assessing calcium and vitamin D intake, physical activity, and adverse behaviors such as smoking and excess alcohol intake should be a routine part of health care for all patients.
- **Advise patients to take active steps to ensure bone health.** Educate patients about the following behaviors that can help prevent osteoporosis and bone disease:
  - Engage in weight bearing physical activity every day (adults should get at least 30 minutes a day of exercise, children should get at least 60 minutes a day).
  - Consume the recommended levels of calcium and vitamin D.
  - Stop smoking and limit alcohol consumption.
  - Have vision checked regularly.
  - Make the home safer by removing small rugs, using non-slip bathmats, and adding handrails and light in all staircases.
- **Familiarize yourself with how to treat osteoporosis and low bone mass.** Drugs that prevent bone breakdown (antiresorptives) have been shown to be effective in reducing the risk of future fractures. These drugs may slow any further deterioration of the skeleton and allow for some repair and restoration of bone mass and strength.
- **Actively look for other bone diseases.** While osteoporosis is the most common bone disease, health care providers must also look for the following bone diseases:
  - Paget's disease—Genetic and environmental factors lead to deformed and weak bones.
  - Genetic abnormalities—Disorders like osteogenesis imperfecta cause bones to grow abnormally and break easily.
  - Rickets and osteomalacia—Severe deficiency of vitamin D in children (rickets) and adults (osteomalacia) can lead to bone deformities and fractures.
  - Kidney disease—Renal osteodystrophy can increase the risk of fractures.
  - Endocrine disorders—Excesses or deficiencies in hormones, e.g. parathyroid hormone, estrogen, thyroxine, can result in bone disease.

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# National Action Can Improve the Bone Health of All Americans

**Too many Americans suffer from preventable bone disease and related fractures.** Americans can take action to improve the nation's bone health.

## What Can America Do?

**Increase awareness of the impact of osteoporosis and related bone diseases, and how they can be prevented and treated throughout life.** Osteoporosis does not have to be an inevitable part of aging. Like heart disease, osteoporosis should be viewed as a chronic disease that can be prevented or managed. Individuals can build stronger bones by getting adequate calcium, vitamin D, and physical activity beginning early in life and continuing throughout life. Older individuals can take steps to prevent falls. And health care professionals can encourage these healthy behaviors, and diagnose and treat bone diseases.

**Educate health care professionals and patients that fractures are a “red flag” that may warrant further testing.** Fractures are vital signals of a weak skeleton and are predictive of future fractures, especially for anyone over age 50. Much as a first heart attack can be an opportunity to intervene to prevent future heart attacks, an individual's first fracture should be seized upon as an opportunity to intervene to prevent future fractures.

**Continue to build the science base on the prevention and treatment of bone disease.** Future research will help us better understand the impact of bone disease on the broader population and specific groups such as different races and ethnicities, while providing information on how to best treat and prevent bone disease.

**Integrate messages and programs on physical activity and nutrition with the messages and programs on healthy lifestyles and on chronic diseases.** Many of the behaviors that prevent bone disease are also critical for preventing or managing other conditions, including diabetes, obesity, heart disease, and stroke. Americans need information promoting healthy lifestyles to prevent these diseases.

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# News You Can Use

## Action Steps for Individuals and Communities to Improve Bone Health

### What can individuals do?

Osteoporosis and low bone mass are preventable and treatable. Since there are no obvious warning signs for bone disease, be aware of *your* risks.

#### Be informed

- **Age.** You are at greater risk if you are a woman, post-menopausal, over age 65, or underweight.
- **Risks.** Fractures are “red flags” if you are older than 50. You are also at greater risk for fractures if you sometimes fall or have trouble seeing clearly.

#### Take action

- **Eat a diet with enough calcium and vitamin D.** Eat a balanced diet of fruit and vegetables, grains, and non-fat or low-fat dairy products to increase calcium and vitamin D. Sunshine is also a good source of vitamin D. If an individual does not consume enough calcium and vitamin D in his or her diet, supplements may help.
- **Be physically active.** The Surgeon General recommends at least 30 minutes of physical activity a day for adults and 60 minutes a day for children. Weight-bearing and strength-building activities will also help build strong bones.
- **Reduce risk of falls.** Falls are the leading cause of fractures in older adults. To prevent falls, ensure a safe walking environment and clear passageways, get regular vision checks, and report any falls to a doctor.
- **Discuss any risks with a health care professional.** Discuss history of fractures, family history, medical conditions, prescription drugs, intake of calcium and vitamin D, and physical activity with a health care professional. Ask about a bone density test. A health care professional may recommend treatment to prevent further bone loss or improve bone mineral density.

### What can communities do?

Communities (clinicians, hospitals, extended care facilities, health plans, public health and government agencies, and businesses) can promote bone health by increasing awareness, promoting lifestyle changes, and defining and implementing treatment options for people of all ages.

#### Educate.

- **Bone health.** Increase awareness about bone health and the risk factors for bone disease.
- **Lifestyle factors.** Educate consumers about lifestyle changes that will promote bone health or that will manage bone disease.

#### Implement diagnostic and treatment measures.

- **Screen.** Identify and screen susceptible patients.
- **Prevention.** Develop preventive care measures and track patient progress as needed.



- **Treatment.** Institute treatment methods for patients with different risk levels and monitor progress.

**Evaluate program success.**

- **Bone health.** Track bone health progress of patients and different populations of susceptible patients.
- **Screening, diagnosis, treatment.** Evaluate and improve all levels of screening, diagnosis, and treatment.

**Establish policies.**

- **Financial incentives.** Financial incentives, such as tax credits, could promote the widespread availability of fitness centers that provide exercise classes to seniors at risk for falling.
- **Urban planning.** Local urban planning policies can also promote bone health by developing public spaces that minimize the risk of falling and that offer opportunities for outdoor exercise.
- **Quality-control standards.** Government agencies can also set quality control standards for assessing bone mineral density tests and certification standards for densitometer operators.

**Call toll free 1-866-718-BONE to order a free publication from the Surgeon General about bone health. For more information visit [www.surgeongeneral.gov](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov).**

***Citation***

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# What Foods Are High in Calcium?

## Calcium Calculator

*Help your bones. Choose foods that are high in calcium. Here are some examples.*

<b>Food</b>	<b>Calcium (mg)</b>	<b>Points</b>
Fortified oatmeal, 1 packet	350	<b>3</b>
Sardines, canned in oil, with edible bones, 3 oz.	324	<b>3</b>
Cheddar cheese, 1 1/2 oz. shredded	306	<b>3</b>
Milk, nonfat, 1 cup	302	<b>3</b>
Milkshake, 1 cup	300	<b>3</b>
Yogurt, plain, low-fat, 1 cup	300	<b>3</b>
Soybeans, cooked, 1 cup	261	<b>3</b>
Tofu, firm, with calcium, 1/2 cup	204	<b>2</b>
Orange juice, fortified with calcium, 6 oz.	200-260 (varies)	<b>2-3</b>
Salmon, canned, with edible bones, 3 oz.	181	<b>2</b>
Pudding, instant, (chocolate, banana, etc.) made with 2% milk, 1/2 cup	153	<b>2</b>
Baked beans, 1 cup	142	<b>1</b>
Cottage cheese, 1% milk fat, 1 cup	138	<b>1</b>
Spaghetti, lasagna, 1 cup	125	<b>1</b>
Frozen yogurt, vanilla, soft-serve, 1/2 cup	103	<b>1</b>
Ready-to-eat cereal, fortified with calcium, 1 cup	100-1000 (varies)	<b>1-10</b>
Cheese pizza, 1 slice	100	<b>1</b>
Fortified waffles, 2	100	<b>1</b>
Turnip greens, boiled, 1/2 cup	99	<b>1</b>
Broccoli, raw, 1 cup	90	<b>1</b>
Ice cream, vanilla, 1/2 cup	85	<b>1</b>
Soy or rice milk, fortified with calcium, 1 cup	80-500 (varies)	<b>1-5</b>
<b>Points Needed:</b>		<b>Your total today</b>
babies/toddlers (ages 0-3) need ..... <b>2-5</b>		
children (ages 4-8) need ..... <b>8</b>		
teens need ..... <b>13</b>		
adults under 50 need ..... <b>10</b>		
adults over 50 need ..... <b>12</b>		

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# How Much Calcium, Vitamin D, and Physical Activity Do I Need?

	Calcium (mg/day)	Vitamin D (IU/day)	Physical Activity	Bone Density Testing	Patients at Increased Risk
<b>Infants</b>					
0-6 mo.	210	200	Interactive play	As clinically indicated in high risk patients	Frequent fractures, anorexia, amenorrhea, chronic hepatic renal, gastrointestinal autoimmune disease, some medications, e.g., antiepileptic medications, glucocorticoids
6-12 mo.	270				
<b>Children and Adolescents</b>					
1-3 yrs.	500	200	Moderate to vigorous activity at least 60 minutes per day. Emphasize weight bearing activity	As clinically indicated in high risk patients	
4-8 yrs.	800				
9-18 yrs.	1,300				
<b>Adults</b>					
18-50 yrs.	1,000	200	Moderate activity at least 30 minutes every day. Emphasize weight bearing activity	As clinically indicated in high risk patients	Individuals with fractures or multiple risk factors.
51-70 yrs.	1,200	400	Fall prevention programs modified for the frail elderly and spine fracture patients.	Bone density test by DXA in all women over age 65; consider in women and men under age 65 with multiple risk factors.	
>70 yrs.	1,200	600			

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