
Diabetes and Your Bones: Get The Facts

If you have diabetes, it is important to take care of your bones. People with diabetes may have an increased risk of osteoporosis. Here are a few facts to know about osteoporosis:

- Osteoporosis is a disease that causes bones to become thin and weak, and more likely to break.
- The most common bones to break as a result of osteoporosis are in the spine, wrist, or hip.
- Osteoporosis is often called a "silent disease" because you can't feel or see your bones getting thinner. Many people do not even know that they have osteoporosis until a bone breaks.
- People with osteoporosis most often break bones as a result of a simple fall, often from standing height.
- A broken bone can interfere with your daily activities, and it can have serious consequences.

What is the relationship between diabetes and bone health?

Bone loss may be greater in people with poorly controlled diabetes, than in those whose diabetes is in tight control. It is important to keep your blood glucose levels as close to normal as possible.

If you have Type 1 diabetes:

- You may have been diagnosed with diabetes at a young age, at a time when you build the most bone.
- The cells that form bone do not seem to work as well as in people without diabetes.
- For these reasons, you may have lower bone mass and a higher risk for broken bones.

If you have Type 2 diabetes:

- You may have been diagnosed with diabetes at any age.
- You may have a higher risk for broken bones than people without diabetes, even if you have the same bone mass.
- You may have an increased risk of falls associated with complications of diabetes, such as changes in your vision or neuropathy (numbness, tingling, or pain in your feet).
- You may take oral medications called thiazolidinediones (TZDs), which have been linked to bone loss and an increased risk of broken bones.

What can you do to protect your bones?

Good news! The consequences of diabetes, including osteoporosis and broken bones, may be prevented by following these steps to promote stronger bones for life:

- Try to reach and maintain your ideal body weight.
- Consume a varied, nutrient-rich diet that follows the meal plan recommended by your health care provider.
- Include a calcium-rich food at each meal or snack and speak to your healthcare provider about getting the recommended amount of vitamin D. A vitamin D supplement may be recommended.
- Participate in regular physical activity to build bone in youth, slow bone loss in adulthood, and improve muscle strength, posture and balance at all ages. Physical activity may also help prevent falls.
- Avoid smoking and limit alcoholic beverages.
- Take actions to prevent falls. Examples include: placing lights in your home to prevent the risk for falls during the night, removing tripping hazards such as scatter rugs, and having routine eye and hearing exams.
- If you have diabetes and are a postmenopausal woman or a man over 50, speak to your health care provider to find out when you should get a bone mineral density (BMD) test. A BMD test can diagnose osteoporosis before a bone breaks.