



## Bone Health

Healthy bones can help you stay strong and active throughout your life. If good bone health is achieved during childhood and maintained, it can help to avoid bone loss and fracture later in life. Osteoporosis is a common bone disease that affects both men and women (mostly women), usually as they age. It is associated with low-bone mass and thinning of the bone structure, making bones fragile and more likely to break.

### KEEPING ACTIVE AND EATING WELL

Weight-bearing and muscle-strengthening exercises are great ways to build and maintain healthy bones, and stimulate bone growth to help prevent and treat osteoporosis. Most of these exercises are simple and can be done at home with no special equipment. Eating a balanced diet with plenty of calcium, vitamin D, and perhaps other supplements as needed will also help preserve bone health.

### BENEFITS OF GOOD BALANCE

Exercises to improve balance and coordination can help reduce falls and their resulting fractures. They also can improve posture, core stability, and coordination to protect the spine against compression fractures. An individualized exercise program prescribed by a physical therapist may include a walking regimen, Tai Chi, and other exercises geared toward conditioning, balance, and coordination.

### GOOD POSTURE AND BODY MOVEMENT

Good posture and safe movement protect bones from fracture during daily activities. Using proper posture and safe body movement protects your bones against injury. Here are some tips to keep in mind:

- Keep your back, stomach, and leg muscles strong and flexible.
- Do not slouch when standing or sitting.
- Use good body positioning at work, home, or during leisure activities.
- Ask for help when lifting heavy objects.
- Wear protective equipment (helmets, mouth guards, shin pads, etc) during sports and activities (lacrosse, soccer, football, ice skating, biking, etc).

### HOW A PHYSICAL THERAPIST CAN HELP

Physical therapists can design an individualized exercise program to benefit bone health, improve posture, decrease your risk for osteoporosis and treat its effects, and reduce the risk of fractures from falls.

