Protecting Your Bones

If you find out you have low bone density, now is a good time to make sure you’re taking steps to protect your bone health. Here’s a quick checklist for keeping your bones strong and healthy:

- Get enough calcium every day. This is important throughout your life for healthy bones. Adults under age 50 need 1,000 mg of calcium every day. Adults age 50 and older need 1,200 mg of calcium every day. If you get enough calcium from the foods you eat, then you don’t need to take a supplement. The total amount of calcium you get includes the calcium in the foods you eat, plus your multivitamin and supplements.
- Be sure to get your vitamin D. Adults under age 50 need 400-800 IU of vitamin D every day. Adults age 50 and older need 800-1,000 IU of vitamin D every day. Some people may need more. There are several ways to get vitamin D: from sunlight, a few foods, multivitamins, supplements and medicines.
- Make exercise a part of your routine every day. You need to exercise regularly to keep your bones strong and healthy. Two types of exercises are important for bone health:
  - weight-bearing exercises, such as walking, running and jumping rope
  - muscle-strengthening exercises, such as weight lifting and using exercise bands and resistance machines
- Be careful with salt, caffeine and cola drinks. Too much is not good for your bones.
- Don’t smoke. Smoking is bad for your bones for many reasons.
- Avoid too much alcohol. Heavy drinking weakens bones. Drinking more than two to three alcoholic drinks a day can harm your bones.

Talk to your healthcare provider. Make your healthcare provider your partner in keeping your bones strong.

Taking an Osteoporosis Medicine

Decisions about when to take a medicine to prevent bone loss are complex. In addition to your bone density test result, your healthcare provider looks at:

- Your age
- Your gender
- If you have broken a bone in the past
- Your chance of breaking a bone in the future using the FRAX™ tool
- Other diseases or conditions you have
- Medicines you take
- Your lifestyle
- Your family medical history
- Your chance of falling
- Other factors

Thank you, Methodist Richardson Hospital for continuing to make a room available for our monthly meetings.