

# Are You At Risk For Osteoporosis?

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Osteoporosis is a crippling bone disease affecting 1 in every 4 women. Bone loss is a natural part of aging and usually occurs after the age of 35. However, excessive loss of bone mass causes the bone to become thin and brittle, leading to a condition known as osteoporosis. Women are more susceptible if you have a family history of osteoporosis, have had your ovaries removed, are Asian or Caucasian, small-boned, inactive, or past the age of menopause.

## Symptoms

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Osteoporosis takes years to develop and may or may not have symptoms. Some warnings signals include:

- Curvature of the upper back
- Loss of height
- Fractures (hip, wrist, spine)

## Prevention and Treatment

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With the proper diet, exercise, and medical attention, the danger of osteoporosis can be reduced. Here are some simple preventive measures that you can take:

- Avoid drinking and smoking
- Eat foods high in calcium, such as dairy products, firm tofu, canned fish with bones, dark-green leafy vegetables
- Daily exposure to sunlight to help the body make vitamin D needed for the absorption of calcium
- Routine weight-bearing exercise such as walking, jogging, running, cycling, or aerobics to strengthen bones. Incorporate regular strength or weight training to stimulate bone growth and build muscles
- Consider medications and calcium supplement to build bone mass
- Make your home safe against falls and accidents

Although osteoporosis is not curable, you can take positive steps to protect your bones starting now.