



Health *capsule*



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Protect your bones

Osteoporosis is a loss of bone density among aging adults that can cause painful fractures, disability and deformity. While heredity and bone size affect the development of osteoporosis, it is often possible to prevent, delay or reduce bone loss through healthy living.

Bones are constantly being renewed naturally. But with age, this process becomes less efficient, and bone mineral density is lost. Osteoporosis causes bones to become very thin and weak over time and increases the risk of fracture. It is often called "the silent thief" because bone loss occurs without symptoms.

It is estimated that about one out of four women and one out of eight men over the age of 50 in Canada have osteoporosis. Women are especially at risk of osteoporosis. At menopause, estrogen levels, which help keep women's bones healthy, drop dramatically. Although men usually have a greater bone mass than women, they can also suffer from osteoporosis.



In addition to age, there are several factors that will increase your risk of developing osteoporosis. They include:

- a family history of osteoporosis
- low body weight
- a diet low in calcium
- low levels of physical activity
- ovaries removed or early menopause, without hormone replacement
- being past menopause
- vitamin D deficiency
- smoking
- excessive caffeine intake (more than four cups a day of coffee, tea or cola) or excessive alcohol intake (more than two drinks a day)

November:
Osteoporosis
Month

Minimizing Your Risk

If you have some of the risk factors listed above, talk to your doctor about getting a bone density test and take preventive action to reduce the risk. Here are some of the things you can do to protect your bones.

- **Eat well:** follow the advice contained in Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide.
- **Include calcium in your diet:** calcium rich foods include milk and milk products; salmon and sardines with bones; beans; sunflower and sesame seeds; broccoli and other greens; figs; and rhubarb.
- **Get enough vitamin D:** everyone over the age of 50 should take a daily supplement of vitamin D.
- **Be active every day:** bones become stronger with increased activity.
- **Avoid smoking:** smokers have faster rates of bone loss and a higher risk of fractures than non-smokers.
- **Prevent falls:** wear comfortable shoes that give good support.

(Source: www.hc-sc.gc.ca)

Don't text and drive!

Driving an automobile requires the driver's full attention and concentration. Texting at the wheel increases the risk of accident, because the driver's eyes are away from the road from 4 to 6 seconds. At 90 km/h, this is like travelling the length of a football field with your eyes closed.

Various solutions are available to you:

- Turn off your cell phone before heading out.
- If you absolutely have to use your cell phone, pull your vehicle into a location where parking is permitted and where you can do so safely, for example on the side of a road where the maximum speed limit is less than 70 km/h, in a parking lot or service area.
- You can ask passengers in the vehicle to answer calls, read or write text messages for you.
- If you cannot resist using your phone, store it in a place that is out of reach, such as in the trunk, before you get behind the wheel.

Remember that, except where necessary, no one is allowed to bring a vehicle to a stop on the shoulder of a highway, on a highway on-ramp or highway off-ramp.

(Source: www.saaq.gouv.qc.ca)

