

## Osteoporosis and fractures

Osteoporosis means bones of low density (= weak bones). Many people get this especially as they get older without realising until a bone breaks with little trauma. Your fracture will heal just as quickly whether you have osteoporosis or not. The following advice is to prevent future fractures, not to help any current fracture.

If you have the kind of bones where a fracture happens with little trauma, you should see if there is anything you can improve to make your bones stronger. This may prevent a hip fracture in a few years, or spinal wedge fractures.

1. Smoking reduces bone density – East Sussex Stop smoking service is a free service  
See: <https://oneyoueastsussex.org.uk/> all free 0300 1231044
2. Exercise improves bone strength, muscle strength and reaction times. It reduces the risk of falls as well as fractures. (Walking every day, cycling, stair-climbing, yoga and Tai chi are good.) See [www.movingmedicine.ac.uk](http://www.movingmedicine.ac.uk) Keep moving!
3. Sunlight helps your body make vitamin D. Many people are deficient in vitamin D and have weak bones and painful muscles because of this. (If you are out for more than one hour: wear a hat and/or sunscreen to protect you from sunburn and skin cancers.)
4. Excessive alcohol makes bones weak. Try a glass of soft drink between alcoholic drinks or limit the occasions when you drink alcohol or the amount you drink each time.
5. Some patients need medication to improve bone strength. Your doctor may recommend this to prevent future fractures, especially if you are on steroids, have low mobility or have severe or obvious osteoporosis.
6. Your GP may recommend a test. But the test will not help on its own. You should improve whatever you can (eg increase activity level) as people whose DEXA scan is “normal” can still break their hip. On [www.shf.ac.uk/FRAX](http://www.shf.ac.uk/FRAX) you can calculate your risk.

You may need more intensive investigation and treatment if you have other conditions that can weaken bones, such as: early menopause, excessive alcohol intake, low body weight, myeloma, coeliac disease, primary hyperparathyroidism or kidney disease.

### ESHT fracture liaison service – Fragility Bone Health Assessments

There is a local service for: patients over 50 who have a fractured following a fall from standing height, or have pubic rami fractures or spinal fractures; or patients under age 75 who have a hip fracture. Often the referral is made automatically from fracture clinic. Sometimes a clinician will send a referral to: [esht.fractureliaisonservice@nhs.net](mailto:esht.fractureliaisonservice@nhs.net)

### Further information

Helpful information from National Osteoporosis Society – <https://theros.org.uk/> Tel: 0808 800 0035

Good advice on how to increase physical activity for everyone – [www.movingmedicine.ac.uk](http://www.movingmedicine.ac.uk)

Hastings and district Osteoporosis support group: <https://co-operate.coop.co.uk/groups/hastings-and-area-osteoporosis-support-group/> You can also find them on Facebook

## **[Vitamin D and Orthopaedics ESHT information leaflet](https://www.esht.nhs.uk/leaflet/vitamin-d-in-orthopaedics/)**

### **Sources of information**

NICE guidance CG146 (2012) Osteoporosis <http://www.nice.org.uk/CG146>

Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (2015) Exercise: the miracle cure and the role of the doctor in promoting it <http://www.aomrc.org.uk/publications/reports-guidance/exercise-the-miracle-cure-0215/>

### **Important information**

This patient information is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

### **Your comments**

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the Patient Experience Team – Tel: 0300 131 4731 (direct dial) or by email at: [esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net](mailto:esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net)

### **Hand hygiene**

The trust is committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available at the patient bedside for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering.

### **Other formats**

**If you require any of the Trust leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department.**

**Tel: 0300 131 4434 Email: [esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net](mailto:esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net)**

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse, doctor or Practitioner.

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### **Reference**

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:

Mrs Scarlett McNally, Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon

Elly Fielder, Rheumatology Nurse Specialist

Next review date:

Responsible clinician/author: Mrs Scarlett McNally, Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon

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