



Healthy Bones

Why They Matter for American Indians and Alaska Natives



Strong bones are important for good health. They give our bodies support, help us move, and protect us from injuries. Bones also store minerals that our bodies need to stay healthy. There are things you can do to keep your bones strong and healthy. Some of these include:

- Eating healthy, well-balanced meals
- Getting regular exercise
- Not smoking or drinking too much alcohol

These healthy behaviors can help you prevent **osteoporosis**, a condition where bones become weak and more likely to break. **In fact, half of all women and one in four men over the age of 50 will break a bone due to osteoporosis.** Most will break a bone in the hip, spine, or wrist.

If you have ever broken a bone, you already know how painful it can be. Even after a broken bone heals, many people continue to have pain for a long time and may need help getting around and taking care of themselves.

Osteoporosis is a real risk for older American Indians and Alaska Natives. Younger women and men with certain risk factors can also get osteoporosis. For example, many Natives do not get enough calcium, a mineral that is very important for strong bones. Also, Native women and men have high rates of diabetes, which can increase the chance of getting osteoporosis.

You have the power to prevent or delay osteoporosis. You may be at increased risk for osteoporosis if you:

- Have broken a bone after age 45
- Have a mother or father who broke a hip
- Have a diet that is low in milk and dairy products
- Smoke cigarettes
- Drink more than one or two alcoholic beverages a day
- Have diabetes
- Are a cancer survivor
- Exercise less than 3 to 5 days per week
- Are small and thin
- Are a woman who has been through menopause

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The NIH Osteoporosis and Related Bone Diseases ~ National Resource Center is supported by the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases with contributions from: National Institute on Aging, Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, NIH Office of Research on Women's Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Office on Women's Health.

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If you have any of these risk factors, you should talk to your doctor about steps you can take to protect your bones. Following are free resources to help you learn more about your bone health and risk factors for osteoporosis.

For more information on:	Call toll free:	Or visit:
Alcohol	800-624-2663	www.niams.nih.gov/health_info/bone
Asthma	800-624-2663	www.niams.nih.gov/health_info/bone
Bone Health and Osteoporosis from the U.S. Surgeon General	800-624-2663	www.niams.nih.gov/health_info/bone
Breast and Prostate Cancer	800-624-2663	www.niams.nih.gov/health_info/bone
Diabetes	800-624-2663 800-860-8747	www.niams.nih.gov/health_info/bone www.diabetes.niddk.nih.gov
Exercise	800-624-2663	www.niams.nih.gov/health_info/bone
Lactose Intolerance	800-891-5389	www.digestive.niddk.nih.gov
Menopause	800-222-2225	www.nia.nih.gov
Nutrition	800-624-2663	www.niams.nih.gov/health_info/bone
Osteoporosis and Seniors	800-222-2225 (Online only)	www.nia.nih.gov www.nihseniorhealth.gov
Risk Factors (<i>Check Up On Your Bones</i> Web tool)	(Online only)	www.niams.nih.gov/health_info/bone
Smoking	800-624-2663	www.niams.nih.gov/health_info/bone

Do you have osteoporosis or another bone disease? You may be able to help scientists learn more about these conditions. For information about research projects near your home, call the NIH Osteoporosis and Related Bone Diseases ~ National Resource Center at 800-624-BONE (624-2663) or visit www.nih.gov. You could make a difference!