



Wake Forest University School of Medicine  
**Women's Health Center of Excellence for Research,  
Leadership, Education**  
Fact Sheet

## Osteoporosis

We all lose bone mass as we age. Bones are strongest from ages 20 to 35. Osteoporosis occurs when bones become weak. Women are at greater risk for losing bone mass when they reach menopause.

### *What Can I Do For Prevention?*

- ▶ Eat foods with calcium and Vitamin D.
- ▶ Exercise. This helps strengthen your bones and muscles.
- ▶ Don't smoke or drink alcohol.
- ▶ Make your home safe to prevent falls. Remove clutter, secure rugs, use shower mats, and keep rooms well lit.

### *How Do I Know If I Have Osteoporosis?*

A big sign is when you break a bone after a fall. Your doctor can give you a test to measure your bone mass.

### *What Are The Risk Factors?*

1. **Older Age:** The older you are, the greater your risk. It is most common in women after menopause.
2. **Female:** Women have less bone than men and lose it faster. They also live longer than men, and older age is a risk factor.
3. **Ethnicity:** White or Asian.
4. **Body type:** Small boned or thin women are at a greater risk.
5. **Lifestyle:** Smoking, heavy alcohol use, lack of exercise, and lack of calcium all increase risk.
6. **Family history of Osteoporosis.**

*Ask your doctor about having a test to check your bones.*

*This information is general. If your doctor tells you something different, follow his or her instructions.*

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*For more information about women's health issues, stop by our Resource Center at 2000 West First Street, Piedmont Plaza II, 1st Floor, Winston Salem, NC 27104, visit our website at [wfubmc.edu/whcoe](http://wfubmc.edu/whcoe) or contact us at (336) 713-4220.*

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