

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

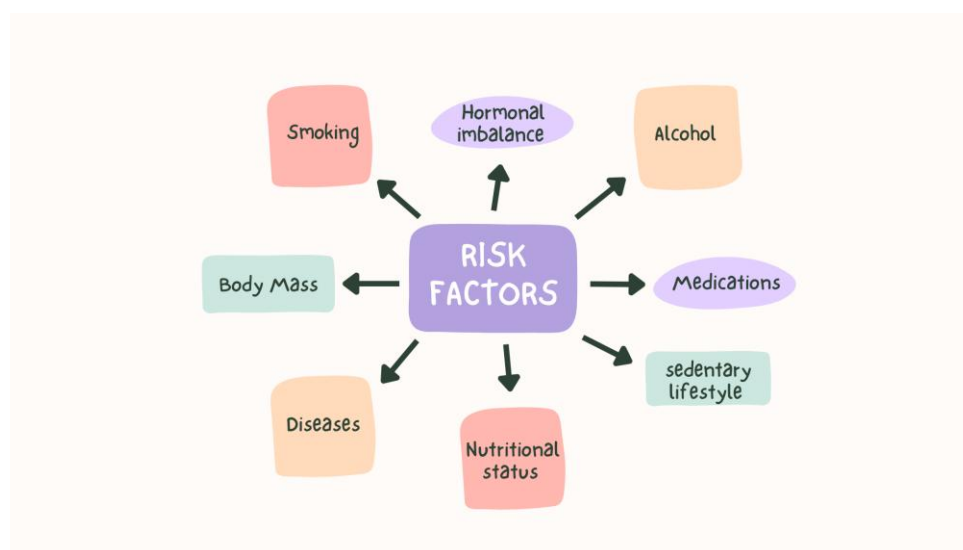
Bone health

Why does bone health matter?

Your bones support your body, protect your organs, and store essential minerals. It's never too early or too late to start looking after your bones. A healthy, balanced diet and regular exercise can help keep your bones strong at every stage of your life. Keeping your bones strong helps reduce the chance of osteoporosis and broken bones (fractures).

What can I do to help keep my bones strong?

- **Stay active** - being inactive makes your muscles and bones lose strength. This increases your risk of osteoporosis, falls and fractures.
- **Eat well** - eating a healthy, balanced diet can help you get all the nutrients you need for your bones.
- **Maintain a healthy weight** - if you're underweight or overweight, your risk of osteoporosis and broken bones increases, you should aim to keep your body weight in the range that is healthy and appropriate for you.
- **Reduce smoking and alcohol** – drinking more than the recommended levels of alcohol and smoking can harm your bones. This means they increase your chance of osteoporosis and broken bones



What else can affect my bone health?

- **Age** – bone density decreases naturally over time.
- **Gender** – women are more at risk, especially post-menopause. There's usually a reduction in your bone density, around the time of menopause, due to dropping oestrogen levels.
- **Hormone levels** – hormones can affect bones. If you have a medical condition that affects your hormone levels, this could impact your bone health. Low testosterone or oestrogen levels can also cause a loss of bone mass. If you have any concerns, discuss this with your doctor or GP.
- **Race and family history** - people of white or Asian descent are at a higher risk of osteoporosis than other people. People who have a parent with osteoporosis are at higher risk too. A family history of broken bones also raises the risk.



Five lifestyle changes for healthy bones

1. Eat a bone-healthy diet:

- High in **calcium** (dairy products, leafy greens, tofu, nuts).
- Rich in **vitamin D** (oily fish, egg yolks, fortified foods).
- Stay hydrated and limit caffeine, salt, and processed foods.
- Calcium and vitamin D are two nutrients that are well-known to be important for bones. But there are many other vitamins, minerals and nutrients that are vital to help your bones stay healthy and strong.



2. Exercise regularly:

- Exercise can help keep your bones and muscles strong. It can also help your balance so you're less likely to fall over and break a bone.
- Bones get stronger when you use them. The best way to help your bone strength is to do weight-bearing impact and muscle-strengthening exercise.
- **Weight-bearing exercises examples** - walking, hiking, dancing.
- **Resistance training examples** - using your own body, weights or resistance bands.
- **Balance and flexibility examples** - yoga or tai chi to improve balance and coordination, to reduce risk of tripping, slipping and falling.

3. Get enough sunlight

Aim for 10–30 minutes of safe sunlight exposure several times a week to help your body produce vitamin D. Vitamin D helps your body absorb and use calcium, which gives bones their strength and hardness. It also helps your muscles stay strong, which reduces your risk of breaking a bone in a fall.



4. Quit smoking and limit alcohol

Smoking and heavy alcohol use both accelerate bone loss. Reducing or quitting can significantly improve your bone health.



Smoking slows down the cells that build bone in your body. This means smoking could reduce your bone strength and increase your risk of breaking a bone. If you're a woman, smoking also increases your chances of an earlier menopause. Postmenopausal women have an increased risk of osteoporosis and breaking a bone. Rest assured, though, it's not too late. If you give up smoking, your risk of breaking a bone begins to return to normal.

Drinking a lot of alcohol increases your risk of osteoporosis. In the short term, it also makes you unsteady on your feet, making you more likely to trip, fall and break a bone.






5. Fall-proof your environment

Some ideas may be using non-slip mats, reducing uneven surfaces, installing grab rails or improve lighting.

Regular vision and hearing checks can also help prevent falls.



Quick tips for strong bones:

-  Eat a balanced, healthy diet.
-  Do 15–30 minutes of daily physical activity.
-  Limit alcohol.
-  Quit smoking.
-  Reduce your risk of slips, trips and falls.

Need more help?



Scan the code with your mobile phone. This link takes you to the Royal Osteoporosis Risk Checker for osteoporosis and to access their website.



Your Health Notts supports everyone living in Nottinghamshire including children, young people, adults and families to get active, lose weight, reduce alcohol intake and quit smoking. The service also provides support for falls prevention and family weight management. Scan the QR code or type the link into your browser for more information.

<https://yourhealthnotts.co.uk/>



Better health gives you access to free tools and resources to help, whether you want to lose weight, quit smoking, drink less alcohol or get active. Scan the QR code or type the link into your browser for more information.

<https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/>

Below are free tools and apps to download to help with healthier choices.



Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222

Newark Hospital: 01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

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