

WHAT TO DO IF YOU BREAK A BONE (ALSO CALLED A FRACTURE)

Even the best efforts to protect your bones can't prevent all fractures. Regardless of the bones affected, recovery involves more than just healing the bones. Regaining strength and returning to daily activities is an ongoing process.

Whether from a fall, sports or another activity, broken bones are not a normal part of aging. It's never too late to strengthen your bones and learn what you can do to prevent future fractures and avoid falls, the leading cause of broken bones in older adults.

RECOVERY

DID YOU KNOW?

Broken bones, including those in the spine, can be painful for some time as your muscles and other tissues recover even after the fracture has healed. Ongoing pain can make it hard to sleep and you may tire more easily, so make sure to get extra rest as you recover.



Stick with your treatment plan and follow-up appointments to help manage your pain and monitor your progress.



Breaking a bone can cause worry and frustration. Take time out to talk with a friend, listen to music, enjoy a massage, or try guided meditation to help you relax and stay positive as you heal.



Eat nutritious foods that include enough calcium and make sure you get enough vitamin D to help your body recover and build new bone.

STRENGTHENING

REMEMBER!

The right, safe exercises will help you heal, regain your strength and mobility, and get back to the activities you love.



Ask your healthcare provider to refer you to a physical therapist to help guide your recovery. Check with your insurance plan to understand your coverage.



Physical therapy can help reduce pain and swelling. Your team will also review when to use heat and when to use cold for symptoms. Physical therapy will give you confidence to move and exercise safely.



Guided, at-home exercises are key to regaining strength and range of motion.



An occupational therapist can also help you return to your daily activities and reduce your risk of falls, so you can live more independently as you recover.



Try not to be impatient with your progress or frustrated with small gains. It takes a long time to heal your bones and regain strength and movement.

PREVENTING ANOTHER BROKEN BONE

TAKE ACTION!

Breaking a bone is not a normal part of aging. Any broken bones in people over the age of 50 that are not caused by a serious accident (such as a car crash or falling off a ladder) can be the first sign of low bone density or osteoporosis.



Tell your primary care doctor right away if you have broken a bone.



Ask for a bone density test—also called a DXA scan—to help determine your bone strength.



You may have osteoporosis—a common condition that leads to thinner bones more likely to break. Or, you might learn you have low bone density (called osteopenia) that can lead to osteoporosis.



Once you break a bone, you are more likely to break another one. The good news is that osteoporosis is manageable and you can take steps to maintain strong, healthy bones to prevent another fracture.



Find a healthcare provider who focuses on bone health to help you with nutrition, exercise, and effective medications to strengthen your bones. Make sure to mention if you are worried about your balance or falling.



Since falls are the leading cause of broken bones in older adults, keep exercising to improve balance and strength, have your eyes and feet checked, and make your home safer.