

Smoking and Your Bones

Osteoporosis is a disease that causes bones to become thin, weak and break easily. You cannot feel or see your bones getting thinner. Although you can break a bone in any part of your body, the most common broken bones associated with osteoporosis are the spine, wrist and hip. Osteoporosis is largely preventable for most people by taking healthy actions for strong bones.

Know the Facts: Smoking Harms Your Bones

- Smoking can increase your risk for getting osteoporosis.
- You are less likely to develop osteoporosis later in life if you develop larger, stronger bones (greater peak bone mass) in youth. Smoking during youth, when bones are still growing can prevent a person from reaching their peak bone mass.
- A healthy body weight and regular physical activity are important to build strong bones in youth and keep them strong in adulthood. People who smoke tend to be thinner and exercise less than people who don't smoke.
- As people age, both men and women who smoke tend to have more rapid bone loss.
- Smoking in adulthood is associated with higher risk of broken bones. In the senior years, smoking greatly increases the risk for hip fractures. It is important to quit smoking to reduce your chances of a painful spine or hip fracture, or to help heal a current fracture.

How Do I Promote Strong Bones?

In addition to avoiding smoking, you can help promote strong bones for life by:

- Eating a nutrient-rich diet that includes plenty of fruits and vegetables
- Choosing foods to get the calcium you need and adding a supplement only if necessary
- Getting the recommended vitamin D; this usually requires a supplement
- Being physically active every day (for example: walking, climbing stairs, or dancing)
- Limiting the amount of alcohol you drink
- Taking safety precautions to prevent falls
- Speaking to your health care provider about your bone health.

How Do I Get Help To Quit Smoking?

The good news is there is help to quit and it is free!

By calling The New York State Smokers' Quitline 1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487) or visiting the New York State Smokers' Quitsite at www.nysmokefree.com, you can find out how to quit smoking. The sooner you quit smoking the better. Quitting smoking is an important way to reduce your risk for osteoporosis, prevent broken bones, and improve your overall health.