## ASK THE EXPERT

# Healthy **Bone Tips with Dr. Andrea Singer**



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### Q. Why should I be concerned about osteoporosis?

A. Osteoporosis is a chronic disease of the bones and should be taken very seriously. It is defined by low bone density, leading to weaker bones that are more likely to break. A fractured bone can cause severe pain and prevent you from getting around easily and maintaining your daily lifestyle. Complications from a broken bone or related surgery can even lead to early death or long-term nursing home care. Fortunately, it can be detected and treated, making it important that you play an active role in your bone health.

#### Q. Who is at risk?

A. There are a variety of factors that can put you at risk for developing osteoporosis. Here is a list of risk factors about which you should talk to your health care provider.

Age over 50
Postmenopausal status
A family history of osteoporosis or fracture
Low body weight/being small and thin
Insufficient calcium and vitamin D intake
Prior fractures
Consuming too much protein, sodium and caffeine

Inactive lifestyle

Smoking and excessive alcohol intake

### Q. When should I get screened?

A. The National Osteoporosis Foundation (NOF) recommends that all women over 65 and postmenopausal women with additional risk factors noted above should be screened with a DXA bone density test. Men over 70 and men under 70 with specific risk factors should also be screened.

#### Q. Where do I get a DXA bone density exam?

A. Most people need a prescription or referral from their healthcare provider to have a bone density test. To find out where you can get screened, contact your healthcare provider or your insurance plan.

#### Q. What does the DXA bone density test entail?

A. Bone density tests are non-invasive, painless and last about 15 minutes. The patient is asked to lie down and be still while a machine scans different areas of the body. No needles are used and most of the time you do not have to get undressed.

#### Q. How can I protect myself against osteoporosis?

- A. You can help lower your risk by engaging in the following:
  - · Get active: Doing regular weight-bearing and musclestrengthening exercise is one of the best ways to protect against osteoporosis and broken bones.
  - Get healthy: Calcium, vitamin D, lean protein, fruits, vegetables, and healthy fats are the key to eating for healthy bones.
  - Get checked: The painless, 15-minute test a bone density scan – will help predict your risk of breaking a bone.
  - · Get clean: To maintain good bone health, don't smoke or drink excessively.

#### Q. What questions should I ask my health care provider?

- A. Playing an active role in your bone health is important. The next time you visit your health care provider, here are some questions you can ask:
  - Am I at risk for osteoporosis?
  - Can I make any changes to reduce my risks?
  - Do I need a DXA bone density scan?
  - · Ask your health care provider if you are taking any medications which may put you at risk.

#### Learn more at BoneAwareness.com

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