



Stronger Bones During and After Cancer Treatment

Osteoporosis is a disease that causes bones to become thin and weak, often resulting in fractures (broken bones). Osteoporosis is a silent disease. You cannot see or feel your bones getting thinner. Keeping your bones strong is a lifelong process. The more you know about what you can do to keep your bones strong, the more likely you are to prevent osteoporosis.

Did you know that certain **types of cancer** increase the risk of osteoporosis?

Some of these include:

- Breast cancer
- Ovarian Cancer
- Prostate cancer
- Testicular cancer
- Multiple myeloma (a bone marrow cancer)
- Various metastatic cancers (cancers that have spread throughout the body)

Certain medications used to treat cancer can also increase the risk of osteoporosis.

These include:

- Aromatase inhibitors (such as Arimidex, Femara, Aromasin)
- Some chemotherapy medications
- Immunosuppressive medications (medications that slow or stop your immune system such as methotrexate)
- Androgen deprivation therapy (known as ADT, used as a hormone lowering medication)
- Steroid medications (such as prednisone, cortisone)

There are many **risk factors** for osteoporosis and the related fractures. Some of these include:

- Family history of osteoporosis or hip fracture
- Height loss of more than 1-1/2 inches or stooped posture
- Early menopause in women (age 45 or younger)
- Breaking a bone after age 50
- Taking medications that cause bone loss such as steroids; excess thyroid hormone replacement; the blood thinner coumadin and certain anti-convulsant (seizure) medications
- Certain medical conditions, such as rheumatoid arthritis or celiac disease
- Being underweight
- Eating a poor diet especially if it is low in calcium and/or vitamin D
- Getting too little physical activity
- Smoking
- Drinking too much alcohol

It is important to discuss your personal risk factors for osteoporosis with your healthcare provider. You cannot change some risk factors for osteoporosis but there are many steps you can take to keep your bones strong for life.

