

Your guide to bone health

This booklet will give you the knowledge you need to take charge of your bone health. In the pages that follow, you will find everything from a basic understanding of osteoporosis and how it is diagnosed, assessing fracture risk, treatment options and advice from a team of experts on nutrition and exercise strategies designed to promote good bone health.

You can help yourself – and others as well – by spreading the word. Get your friends and family involved in healthy eating and activities, spread the word about the risks of osteoporosis, and talk to your doctor about whether you or your family members are at risk of a fracture.

One in four Canadian women over 50 is living with osteoporosis.



What is osteoporosis?

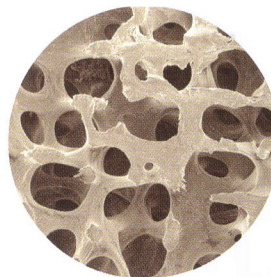
Osteoporosis is a gradual weakening of the bones that occurs as you lose **bone mass** (the amount of mineral content in your bones). Osteoporosis has been called “the silent thief” because it often “steals” bone mass without any pain or other signs that anything is happening. Sometimes the first symptom of osteoporosis is a broken bone.

How osteoporosis develops

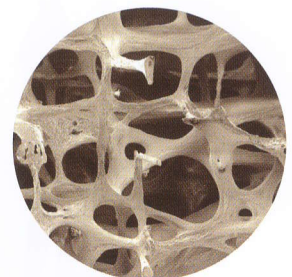
Bone is constantly changing.

There are two types of cells in the body that are responsible for changing bone. Some are cells that create new bone (called **osteoblasts**) and others are cells that remove old bone (called **osteoclasts**). In normal bone, there is a balance between the creation and removal of bone cells. In women, estrogen supports this balance before menopause along with a dietary intake of calcium and vitamin D.

In people with osteoporosis, this balance no longer exists. (This may result from the decline in estrogen that occurs following menopause or insufficient dietary intake of calcium



Normal bone



Osteoporotic bone