

How can I prevent fractures?

Falling is the main cause of fractures. There are several ways to prevent falling, both indoors and outdoors:

Indoors

- Keep rooms free of clutter.
- Eliminate wires and cords that run across the walking areas.
- Wear shoes, not just socks, in the house.
- Be sure each room is well lit.
- Use skid-free rugs throughout the house (if you must use rugs).
- Use a cane or walker if you need to.
- Make sure your vision is as good as it can be. Have an eye exam every year and be sure to use your glasses or contacts.
- If your balance is poor, balance training and physical therapy are important.

Outdoors

- Use a cane or walker if you need to.
- Wear rubber-soled shoes.
- Put salt down on icy sidewalks, driveways, and steps.
- Use care at curbs.
- Pay attention to your surroundings.
- Leave a porch light or outside light on if you are returning after dark.

As we age, we are more likely to have weak bones. When bones get weak, it is very easy for them to break. Many fractures are a result of osteoporosis, a loss of calcium in bones.

Prevention is important. Get enough calcium every day (1200-1500 mg in diet or supplements) and vitamin D (800-1000 IU) to keep bones strong. A multivitamin usually contains 400 IU vitamin D, and calcium tablets can have additional vitamin D. Some examples of food that contain these important nutrients are:

- **Dairy products:** milk, yogurt, and eggs
- **Whole grains:** brown rice, oats, and rye
- **Vegetables:** broccoli, spinach, and kale
- **Beans:** chickpeas, black beans, and tofu
- **Almonds**

It is also important to get plenty of weight-bearing exercise (exercise that involves heel strike activity such as walking) each day to keep bones strong and healthy.