

Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is a condition where the bones become weak and porous and can break with little or no pressure.

Osteoporotic breaks can cause a great deal of pain and decreased quality of life. Up to 50 per cent of adults with disabilities, including cerebral palsy, have low bone mineral density and are at increased risk of osteoporosis.

Risk factors for osteoporosis include:

- Lack of weight bearing
- Low intake of dietary calcium and poor vitamin D status
- Low body weight
- Menopause due to sudden decrease in oestrogen
- Decline in male hormones
- Some medication, including steroids and anti-seizure medication
- Dietary factors including high salt intake, high protein diet, excessive caffeine (more than 8 cups coffee per day) and regular heavy alcohol intake

Vitamin D

Vitamin D is an important component in the prevention of osteoporosis, as it helps the body use calcium to strengthen bones.

There are two primary sources of Vitamin D:

- Diet – foods such as eggs, oily fish, liver and some spreads
- Sunlight – about 10 to 15 minutes per day of safe sun exposure is recommended to boost vitamin D levels

Vitamin D supplements may be recommended for individuals whose levels are low.

There are many useful resources for information and advice about osteoporosis.

- **Osteoporosis Australia** – advice and online assessments
 - osteoporosis.org.au
 - knowyourbones.org.au



- **The Australian Government's Eat for Health website** – information on vitamin D and nutrition
 - eatforhealth.gov.au/guidelines
- **SunSmart** – advice on safe sun exposure and vitamin D
 - sunsmart.com.au

Visit futurethinking.abilitycentre.com.au for more information.