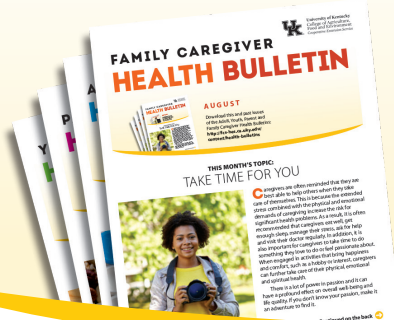




University of Kentucky  
College of Agriculture,  
Food and Environment  
Cooperative Extension Service

# FAMILY CAREGIVER HEALTH BULLETIN



**OCTOBER 2022**

Download this and past issues  
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Family Caregiver Health Bulletins:  
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## THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

# OSTEOPOROSIS AWARENESS



**O**steoporosis is a disease of the bones that causes bone to become weak. It occurs through bone loss and/or because the body makes too little bone. Osteoporosis means “porous bone.” The Bone Health & Osteoporosis Foundation (2022), describes the bone looking like a honeycomb. The spaces in the bone become larger and more spread out in osteoporotic bones. This causes lost bone density and weak and fragile bones. Bones affected by osteoporosis are more prone to breaking. In serious cases, bones can break from just a common sneeze (Bone Health & Osteoporosis Foundation, 2022).

Unfortunately, osteoporosis is both common and serious. The BHOFF (2022) reports that approximately one in two women and one in four men age 50 and older will break a bone because of the disease. While various bones can break, common breaks include those of the hip, spine, and wrist. In addition to frail and broken bones, osteoporosis can cause pain, height loss, and poor posture. It can limit

**Continued on the back** ➔



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Disabilities  
accommodated  
with prior notification.

# ***Risk factors for osteoporosis include family history and disorders related to the autoimmune system, blood, hormones, and diet.***

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mobility and increase risk for falling and long-term care placement. It can also lead to immobility, social isolation, and depression (BHO, 2022).

Some refer to osteoporosis as a silent disease because you cannot necessarily feel it coming. Therefore it is important to recognize risk factors that may cause bone loss and increase the risk for osteoporosis. Some risk factors include family history and disorders related to the autoimmune system, blood, hormones, and diet. Various medical procedures and cancers can increase risk. Neurological disorders, like multiple sclerosis, strokes, and Parkinson's are associated with osteoporosis. In addition, various autoimmune disorders, digestive issues and other medical and mental health conditions can increase the risk for osteoporosis.

If you are a caregiver for someone living with osteoporosis or if you or someone you know is at risk or you wonder about risk, the Bone Health & Osteoporosis Foundation (BHO) recommends finding a health-care provider qualified to diagnose and treat it.

In addition to primary care providers, the BHO recommends the following specialists when it comes to prevention, diagnosis, and treatment. Be sure to ask if they treat osteoporosis.

- Endocrinologists
- Family physicians or general practitioners
- Geriatricians
- Gynecologists
- Internists
- Orthopedists
- Physiatrists
- Rheumatologists

Other health providers knowledgeable about low bone density and osteoporosis include nurses, nurse practitioners, physical and occupational therapists, pharmacists, physician assistants, and registered dietitians. If you do not have someone to call or cannot find help, contact your local Extension agent, or call a local hospital and ask for referral services or for the department that treats osteoporosis.

## **Prepare for your visit**

To make the most of your visit, BHO recommends several tips, including attending the appointment with your loved one so that you can listen, take notes, and/or ask questions.

- **Write things down.** Before the appointment, write down all of your questions and concerns in rank order of importance. Be sure to take a pen and paper with you to the appointment to write down the answers or recommendations.
- **Ask questions.** If you do not understand something or additional questions come up during the appointment, ask for clarification.
- **Bring a list of current medications,** including over-the-counter, supplements, and herbal remedies. In some cases, certain medications may lead to bone loss and/or increase fall risk.
- **Be honest about lifestyle habits.** Truthful information about diet, exercise, family history, smoking, and drinking can help health-care providers more accurately assess bone health.

For a specific list of questions to ask your health-care provider, the BHO created a printable checklist:

<http://www.bonehealthandosteoporosis.org/wp-content/uploads/Talking-with-your-Healthcare-Provider-checklist-2.pdf>

## **REFERENCES:**

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## **FAMILY CAREGIVER HEALTH BULLETIN**

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