

# KEEPING IT TOGETHER!

Osteoporosis is a condition that causes bones to become thin, decreasing bone strength and leading to increased risk of breaking a bone. Osteoporosis is often called the 'silent thief' because bone loss occurs without symptoms. Surprisingly often, people find out they have osteoporosis after they have fractured a bone. The most common fractures are in the hip, spine, wrist and shoulder.



**OSTEOPOROSIS**



**WHY?** Fractures in Long-Term Care are very common. They can cause severe pain, disability and be fatal. If we can reduce serious falls and fractures, we can achieve reduced hospital transfers, immobility, pain and most importantly improve quality of life!

**HOW?** Start the conversation on how to reduce fractures! Know your risk, become aware of your treatment options and **work together**.

## STARTING THE CONVERSATION ON OSTEOPOROSIS

### ASK YOURSELF

- Have I ever broken a hip or bone since age 55?
- Has anyone in my family broken a bone or had osteoporosis?
- Has my back posture changed so I am more hunched over?
- Am I shorter than in my early adulthood?
- Do I take medications for osteoporosis?
- Have I been asked my goal of care?

### ASK YOUR LEADERSHIP/ ADMINISTRATION

- How can we make sure residents have diets rich in calcium and vitamin D?
- How can we make sure residents benefit from vitamin D supplements?
- Are our staff trained to identify residents at risk for fractures?
- Do we have osteoporosis and fracture prevention as part of our falls program?
- What interventions do we have to prevent fractures and fractures from falls?

### ASK YOUR PHYSICIAN/ CARE TEAM LEADS

- Am I on or should I be on osteoporosis medications?
- Am I on the appropriate Calcium and Vitamin D therapy?(older adults)
- Am I doing the right resistance and balance exercises to strengthen my muscles and improve my balance?
- Am I doing safe transfers to protect my spine and other bones?

## What might a resident at high risk look like?

- 85 years or older
- History of recent falls/fractures in the last 6 months
- Walking/wandering
- Thin or slim
- Living with some cognitive impairment

## More Information to Consider



### Talk to Your Health Care Provider

If you are concerned about falls, fractures and osteoporosis or care for someone in LTC, talk to a health care provider about fall and fracture risks.



### Consider Calcium and Vitamin D Supplementation

Osteoporosis Canada recommends 1200 mg calcium intake through diet. If this requirement is not met through food, consider 500 mg calcium/day, via supplements. Vitamin D intake should be between 800 - 2000 unit/day, in older adults.



### Consider Exercise that Improves Strength and Balance

It is important to talk to your health care provider to help you identify safe ways to exercise and be active.



### Make Your Personal Spaces Safe

Consider ways to make your living spaces safe to prevent falls. Think about anti-slip shoes and slippers, floors free of throw-rugs and clutter, supportive walking aids, good lighting at night and more.



### Consider Wearing Hip Protectors

If you have broken a hip in the past, have fallen, and are fearful of falling again; think about wearing hip protectors. Your hips are worth saving!

Looking for more information on how to keep your bones healthy?  
Osteoporosis Canada has identified steps you can follow!  
<http://www.gerascentre.ca/osteo-ltc-seniors-families>