

Protect yourself from broken bones

Your bones keep you upright, but they are at risk for getting broken. There are many ways to break a bone. It can happen to anyone, at any age. Kids are at high risk for fractures in their lower arms. Young adults may break bones during a traumatic event, such as a car crash. And bone loss in older age can lead to breaks, such as hip fractures.



Photo above by Shironosov, below by Kazoka30, courtesy iStockphoto

Quick facts on broken bones:

1 Signs of broken bones can include bruising and pain. Broken bones may look strange. Sometimes a broken bone is very obvious. Other times it is not. Back pain can be a sign, too.



2 Some broken bones are found only by X-ray. If you have pain that sticks around or a very bad backache after lifting something heavy, it is a good idea to get it checked out.

3 Women are at risk for losing bone density after menopause. Estrogen loss is linked to weakening bones. Women 65 and older should get bone density scans.

4 You can take steps to help prevent broken bones and bone density loss. Getting enough calcium and vitamin D will help to keep your bones strong. Both are found in milk, cheese, broccoli and kale.

5 Avoid smoking and drinking too much alcohol, which can make bones weaker. Caffeine and some drugs can also affect bone health.



>> For more information on bone health, visit www.niams.nih.gov