



Bone health and breast cancer



Produced by Breast Cancer Network Australia (BCNA)

Based on BCNA's *Bone health and breast cancer* fact sheet

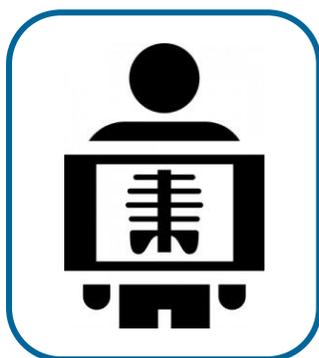
Some breast cancer treatments can affect your bones



Sometimes hormone therapy can lower your bone density. Bone density means the strength and thickness of your bones. When your bone density is low your bones are weaker. This means they may be more likely to break.

If you are given hormone therapy to treat your breast cancer you may need to take extra care to keep your bones healthy.

Find out if your bones are at risk



The strength and thickness of your bones can be tested with X-rays. This test is called a 'bone mineral density test'. Sometimes it is called a 'DXA' test.

Your doctor can organise this test for you. This test is different from the bone scan that you may have had before.

Check the cost with the clinic that does the test. You may be able to get a Medicare rebate. Ask the clinic if you can get a Medicare rebate. Ask how much the test will cost you.



Things that help to keep your bones healthy



Exercise 2 hours a week. Start with gentle exercise. As you go along you can make the exercise stronger.



Eat plenty of fresh fruit, vegetables, wholegrain breads and cereals.



Eat foods high in calcium. That means milk, yoghurt, cheese, fish with soft bones, firm tofu, dark green leafy vegetables, dried figs, apricots and beans.



Get enough vitamin D. You should go out in the sun for 10 to 15 minutes a day. But do not go out when it is very hot. You can also get vitamin D from eggs, liver and oily fish. Margarine and some cereals have vitamin D added. They are also good.



You can take a calcium supplement but talk to your doctor first. It may affect other medicines. If your bone density is low, your doctor might give you medicines to strengthen your bones.



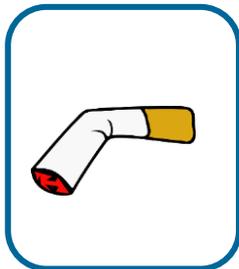
To keep your bones healthy, try to do these things



Avoid alcohol. If you want to drink, have no more than 2 standard drinks a day.



Some food like coffee and tea, chocolate, salt, red meat and soft drinks reduce calcium. Eat or drink less of these things.



Smoking lowers bone density. If you need help to stop smoking, tell your doctor.



Here are exercises that are good for bone health

- Netball
- Basketball
- Aerobics
- Dance
- Tennis
- Running
- Jogging
- Walking
- Climbing stairs
- Weights
- Lawn bowls
- Yoga
- Pilates
- Tai chi



Where to find more information



Breast Cancer Network Australia

For breast cancer information and support, call 1800 500 258 or visit bcna.org.au



Talk to your doctor



Osteoporosis Australia

For information about bone health call 1800 242 141 or visit osteoporosis.org.au



Counterpart

To learn how to improve bone health, listen to the 'Breast cancer and bone health' podcast at counterpart.org.au

breastcancer.org

For information on bone health and how to keep your bones strong visit breastcancer.org

Breast Cancer Care UK

For information about cancer treatments and keeping your bones healthy visit breastcancercare.org.uk