

Six things menopausal women can do for their bone health

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Menopause is a turning point in a woman's life when it comes to health. It is the end of the **menstrual cycle**, and is usually accompanied by a lot of hormonal changes. The signs and symptoms can differ from person to person. While some people have it easy, for others, it is accompanied by discomfort, anxiety, **hot flashes**, mood swings, and hormonal abnormalities.

According to Amol Naikawadi, preventive healthcare specialist and joint managing director, Indus Health Plus, a woman's cardiovascular and bone health "suffer dramatically" after **menopause**.

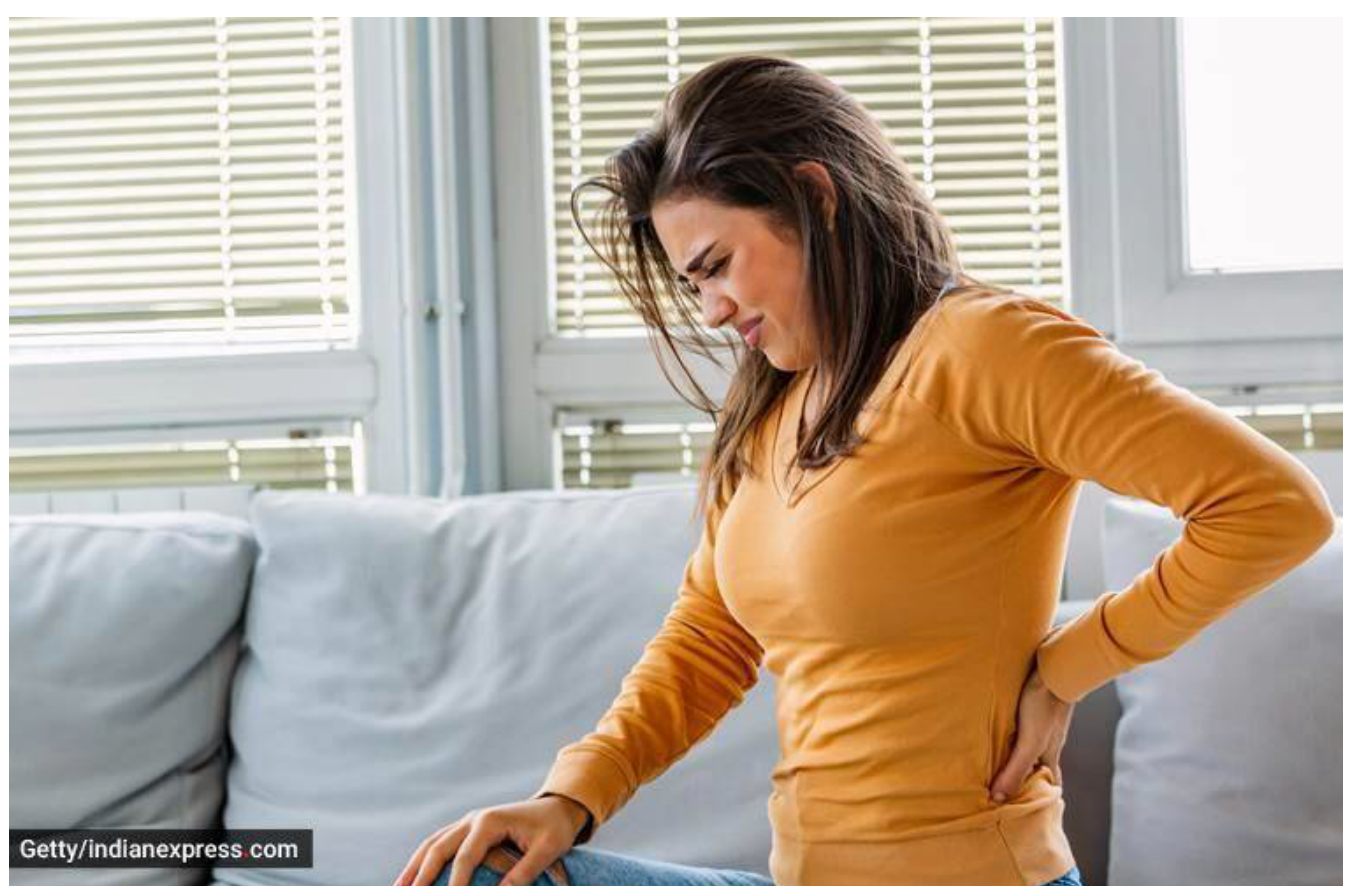
"Osteoporosis, which translates to 'porous bone', results in a significant loss of bone mass and strength. The disease typically progresses without any symptoms or pain," the expert says.

He lists the things menopausal women can do to reduce their risk of osteoporosis and to promote bone health; read on.

1. Eat more calcium-rich foods: Getting enough **calcium** will help rebuild and maintain strong bones. Excellent sources of calcium include dark green leafy vegetables like kale, spinach, and broccoli, low-fat dairy products, canned fish with bones like salmon, calcium-fortified orange juice, and bread made from calcium-fortified flour.

2. Exercise regularly: Exercise prevents bone degeneration and strengthens muscles and bones. It encourages continual movement and activity. Weight-bearing exercises that should be performed at least three to four times a week are the best for preventing osteoporosis. Playing tennis, jogging, walking and dancing can help. Strength and balance exercises may also help avoid falls, reducing the risk of bone fractures.

3. Consume more vitamin D: Your body can better absorb calcium with vitamin D. By spending a total of 20 minutes outside in the sun each day, our bodies can produce enough **vitamin D**. Other sources of vitamin D are milk, fortified cereal, eggs, fatty fish like salmon, and supplements. With too much, your kidneys could suffer, and you could lose bone mass, so you should talk to your doctor about how much is suitable.



4. Research your medications: **Steroids**, several breast cancers therapies, seizure drugs, blood thinners, and thyroid medications can all hasten bone loss. If you take any of these medications, talk to your doctor about ways to reduce your risk of **bone loss** through diet, lifestyle changes, and possibly extra medicines.

5. Consider oestrogen treatment: Oestrogen is a hormone produced by the ovaries; it helps prevent bone resorption, and is a treatment option for osteoporosis prevention. Replenishing the oestrogen lost during menopause enhances the body's capacity to absorb and store calcium (when the ovaries stop producing most of it).

"Oestrogen therapy is only suggested for women with severe menopausal symptoms and at high risk for osteoporosis due to the risks involved," says Naikawadi.

6. Avoid unhealthy substances: Avoid smoking and consumption of alcohol. Smoking reduces the body's production of oestrogen, which protects the bones. Alcohol can weaken the bones and increase the risk of falling and breaking a bone.