

Five Steps to Better Bone Health

(NAPSA)—“Step on a crack; break your mother’s back.” This silly childhood rhyme serves as an important reminder that 34 million Americans have low bone mass, putting them at risk for a more serious health condition—osteoporosis, and for fractures that most commonly occur at the spine, wrist, and hip. Osteoporosis is most common in postmenopausal women and occurs when your body loses bone faster than it is replaced, weakening bones and making them more susceptible to breakage.

“With proper education, nutrition, and certain safeguards, you can improve the health of your bones, decrease the risk of fractures, and help prevent osteoporosis,” said Sandra K. B. Kinsey, a registered pharmacist with Wal-Mart.

To improve bone health, Kinsey recommends the following five steps.

- **Understand the risk factors for osteoporosis.** After menopause, women are at greater risk for developing osteoporosis. The condition also tends to run in families.

- **Participate in a regular exercise program.** It not only keeps your heart healthy, but it also helps you maintain a healthy weight. The program should include some form of weight-bearing exercise such as weight-lifting, jogging or walking, helping to build bone mass and reducing the risk of falls.

- **Eat calcium-rich food**—Dairy products, broccoli, and fish are rich in calcium and are a great choice. You can also find calcium-fortified breads and juices.

- **Take a calcium supplement**—For women 51 and older, the National Osteoporosis Foundation recommends 1,200 mg a day of calcium.

- **Stop smoking.** Smoking increases your chance of developing osteoporosis.



Follow these tips to improve your bone health. There are also a variety of prescription drugs available today that can help protect your bones. For example, Actonel® (risedronate sodium tablets) is a prescription medication to treat and prevent postmenopausal osteoporosis, and has been shown to build bone mass as soon as three months. It can also help prevent fractures in as early as one year.

See your doctor for any bone-health concerns, including information about Actonel and other osteoporosis treatments, and to discuss which exercise program is right for you. For more information, pick up a free health-education brochure at any Wal-Mart Pharmacy.

You should not take Actonel if you have low blood calcium, have severe kidney disease, or cannot sit or stand for 30 minutes. Stop taking Actonel and tell your doctor if you experience difficult or painful swallowing, chest pain, or severe or continuing heartburn as these may be signs of serious upper digestive problems. Side effects are generally mild or moderate and may include back or joint pain, stomach pain or upset, or constipation. Follow dosing instructions carefully. If you have questions about Actonel, please talk to your doctor or pharmacist. You may also call 1-877-ACTONEL (toll free) or visit the Actonel Web site at www.actonel.com.