



# Strong bones after 50

## Staying on treatment

If you are over 50 and have broken a bone after falling from standing height or less (known as a fragility fracture), this document is for you, your family and carers. It explains why people with fragility fractures are recommended treatment, why it is important to stay on treatment and where you can find further information.



**1 in 2 women and 1 in 5 men will be affected by broken bones in their lifetime.**

Broken bones in people over 50 may be the first sign of osteoporosis. Without treatment, people could be at a high risk of even more serious broken bones which may take away their independence and confidence.

### Why is drug treatment important?

If you have broken a bone before, you may have a high fracture risk, and exercise and lifestyle changes alone are unlikely to be enough to reduce your risk of future fractures. Drug treatments help to make your bones stronger and **can reduce your risk of further fractures by up to a half**. This is greater than the benefit that we see with tablets people take to reduce the risk of heart attacks and strokes. The treatments help to strengthen all bones but they are best at reducing fractures in the spine and the hip that can lead to living in a care home or needing carers to look after you at home.

We know from studies that many people who need bone protection treatment are not being started on these medicines as soon as possible after their fracture to get the maximum benefit. When treatment is started many people only take it for a short time because it was not clear that it should be carried on or they have problems taking it.

To get the greatest benefit, treatments must be taken at the right time and in the right way for at least 5 years. The sooner you start taking your drug treatments the better.

There are lots of different treatments. If you are finding it difficult to take your treatments it is important to speak to your doctor or pharmacist rather than just stop taking them. They will be able to assess whether there is a better option for you.

### What about the side effects?

If you do experience side effects, make sure you are taking your treatment the right way by speaking to your doctor or pharmacist. They will be able to assess and work out whether it is the drug treatment causing the symptoms or another cause.

If there are problems with the drug, there is nearly always another drug that you can be switched to. The Royal Osteoporosis Society has produced guides on the different treatments, who should take them, how to take them and possible side effects: <https://theros.org.uk/information-and-support/osteoporosis-treatment/>

### How can I find out more?

The Royal College of Physicians has produced a guide on what the NHS should provide for people who have had a fragility fracture: [www.rcplondon.ac.uk/FLS-patient-info](http://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/FLS-patient-info). If you would prefer a hard copy email us on [flsdb@rcplondon.ac.uk](mailto:flsdb@rcplondon.ac.uk) or call us on **020 3075 1738**.

The Royal Osteoporosis Society is a charity which supports people with osteoporosis. They have a free helpline or email that you can contact with any queries you may have: telephone, **0808 800 0035**; email, [nurses@theros.org.uk](mailto:nurses@theros.org.uk).

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