

**BELLIN FOR WOMEN**

# **ESSENTIALS** *FOR* HEALTH

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Welcome to Essentials for Health—the monthly newsletter of Bellin For Women. You want to take a more active role in your own health, and this is just one of the ways we like to help. This newsletter is your go-to for all kinds of health-related information, from wellness education to health topics in the news to recipes that are good for you and yet somehow taste good, too.

But it's more than that. It's also your connection to BFW. Bellin For Women is a true community of women working support each other, and maybe even have some fun, on our path to better health. Essentials for Health puts all that energy in your inbox every month to keep you encouraged and motivated to make every day happier and healthier.





# DON'T LET DIGESTIVE DISORDERS KEEP YOU DOWN

Heartburn. Gas. Bloating. Diarrhea. Constipation. They're not topics you're going to bring up over brunchtime mimosas (please), but if they're part of your life, there is one place you should mention them: your doctor's office. Options exist, and your doctor can help you find them.

## Acid Reflux/GERD

Acid reflux occurs when stomach acids back up (reflux) into your esophagus, damage the esophageal lining, and cause heartburn. Over time, chronic, uncontrolled heartburn or gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) can lead to esophageal inflammation and even an increased risk of cancer.

But there's good news: Cutting-edge wireless technology can make it easier to get a diagnosis. After putting you under light sedation, your doctor attaches a tiny capsule to the wall of your esophagus, and you just have to wear a radio receiver for a couple of days to give your doctor enough data to make a diagnosis.

## Diverticulosis/Diverticulitis

Diverticulosis—little outpouchings in the lining of the gastrointestinal tract—is common among older people, but it usually doesn't produce symptoms. That doesn't happen until diverticulitis develops, when one of the outpouchings become inflamed or infected. The first line of treatment for that is antibiotics.

## Irritable Bowel Syndrome

Millions of people suffer from IBS every year, more women than men. It's the second most common reason people call in sick to work (behind the common cold), per the American College of Gastroenterology, causing painful cramps, bloating, constipation and diarrhea that are definitely worth staying home for.

The exact cause of IBS is unknown, although it's known to worsen with stress, and there isn't any single treatment method. Some people benefit from dietary changes and fiber supplements, and past research has led to the development of new drugs to treat IBS.

## Hiatal Hernia

A hiatal hernia happens when the stomach starts to push upward into the chest through the diaphragm. It's not just a nightmare to think about—it can be a cause of acid reflux symptoms. Most people with this condition don't require treatment, but if symptoms are really bad, laparoscopic surgery can put things back where they belong.

## Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD)

As you might gather from the name, IBD—which includes ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease—occurs when the bowels (the intestines) become inflamed. There is a genetic predisposition to IBD, but no one cause has been identified.

New drugs are regularly in development to treat IBD, including clinical trials of promising anti-inflammatories. One interesting experimental medicine made from a pig whipworm parasite has proven effective for some Crohn's patients, which is a gross beginning for a seriously beneficial treatment.

## Ulcers

An ulcer happens when an area of the intestine is eroded. Most ulcers result from an H. pylori infection and can be treated with antibiotics. Another common cause is NSAIDs, including anti-inflammatories like aspirin, ibuprofen and arthritis medications, so be careful when you're using over-the-counter pain relievers and always follow the instructions on the bottle.

Depending on your specific digestive problem, your doctor might recommend one or more of these treatments:

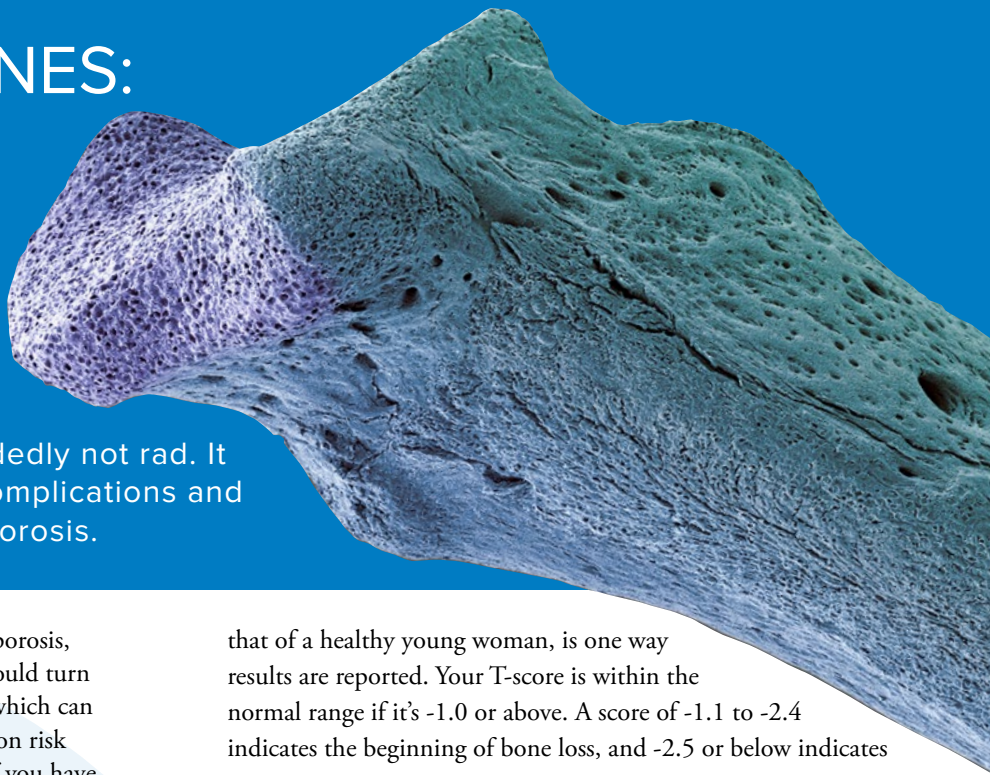
- ❖ Lifestyle changes, like maintaining a healthy weight and reducing stress
- ❖ Diet changes to avoid foods that aggravate your digestive system
- ❖ OTC or prescription medication to ease your symptoms
- ❖ Surgery to treat an underlying condition.





# STICKS AND STONES: PREVENTING BROKEN BONES

When you're a kid, a broken bone can be a badge of honor (particularly if you tell your friends it was from a rad frontside tailslide and not falling in the bathtub). But breaking a bone as an adult is decidedly not rad. It can lead to more serious medical complications and can even be an early sign of osteoporosis.



As many as 10 million people in the U.S. have osteoporosis, and another 30 million have low bone density that could turn into osteoporosis. It doesn't usually announce itself, which can make it hard to diagnose it early, but keeping an eye on risk factors can help head off some of the main causes. (If you have a family history of osteoporosis, you're a prime candidate for the disease.)

Osteoporosis is most common in postmenopausal women, but premenopausal women can face increased risk due to factors like smoking, low body weight, estrogen deficiency, low calcium intake throughout life, alcoholism, poor physical activity, amenorrhea (missed menstrual periods) and use of some drugs like corticosteroids.

## Diagnosis and treatment

The only definitive diagnostic tool for osteoporosis is a bone density test. A T-score, which compares your bone density to

that of a healthy young woman, is one way results are reported. Your T-score is within the normal range if it's -1.0 or above. A score of -1.1 to -2.4 indicates the beginning of bone loss, and -2.5 or below indicates osteoporosis.

A T-score showing osteoporosis doesn't actually mean you have or will definitely get the disease—it just means you have an increased chance of getting it if you lose more bone in the future.

## Treatment tactics

The same monitoring and lifestyle changes that can help prevent osteoporosis can also lessen the impact if you actually get it.

Talk to your doctor about adding supplements like calcium and Vitamin D, as well as other medications. Do weight-

bearing exercises like walking or aerobics for 30 minutes, three or more times a week. Consider adding resistance exercises to your workout routine to build muscle. And please, please, we beg you, stop smoking.

It's also important to identify risk factors that can lead to falls and fractures, like alcoholism or impaired vision.

The earlier you identify risks and make needed lifestyle changes, the better your chance of avoiding osteoporosis or catching it early. The best time to start, of course, is when you're young, but it's never too late. Even if you already have osteoporosis, there are plenty of things you can do to keep your bones as unbreakable as possible.



# EXERCISE EASY: FITNESS GAIN WITHOUT PAIN

Pumping up your fitness routine doesn't have to mean getting swole—in fact, going too hard is a great way to end up swollen.



Overdo exercise and you can have lasting muscle soreness, or even muscle strain and pain that could limit your movement and set you back.

No pain doesn't mean no gain. Instead of crushing it at the gym to get fit quick, set achievable goals that you can revisit on a regular basis. Mix up your routine. Exercise with friends, finding an accountability buddy to help you stick with the program. Most of all, find enjoyable ways to stay fit.

## Getting started

Think about how fit you'd like to be, including things like stamina, strength and energy. Then figure out what steps you'll have to take to get there. If you've been slacking on your exercise routine, start slowly and take your current activity level into consideration. (Use government guidelines as a goal, not a starting

## KALE SALAD (with lemon vinaigrette)

### INGREDIENTS

5 bunches black Tuscan kale  
1 tablespoon red pepper flakes  
¾ cup dried blueberries  
2 cups lemon vinaigrette (below)  
Salt and pepper

### LEMON VINAIGRETTE

½ cup fresh lemon juice  
¼ cup honey  
1 ½ cups olive oil  
1 teaspoon salt

### PREPARATION

Clean stem off kale and chop into ½ inch strips. Toss cleaned and chopped kale with ½ cup of lemon vinaigrette. Lightly massage the dressing into the kale. This should be done at least 8 hours before you serve the kale; overnight is preferred.

For vinaigrette, place all the ingredients in blender and blend for 1 minute. Yields 2 cups.

Right before serving place the kale, red pepper flakes, dried blueberries and ½ cup of the lemon vinaigrette in a large bowl. Toss all together; add more vinaigrette if desired. Yields 10 portions.

### NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION:

346 calories • 31 total fat grams • 4 saturated fat grams  
0 cholesterol • 281 milligrams sodium • 19 grams total carbohydrate • 2.5 grams dietary fiber • 10 grams total sugars • 3 grams protein



point.) If you haven't been exercising at all, it's a good idea to talk to an expert to get you started. Then build up in small increments, like going from 2 miles a day on the treadmill to 2.1 miles.

## Body language

Listen to your body. It'll tell you if you're doing too much too soon. If your muscles shake when you're lifting weights, you're going to be sore. Even if it just feels like a little too much, you're going to be sore. If you do end up with post-workout aches, you can ease up a little on your routine, but don't use it as an excuse to stop moving entirely.

## Mix it up

Along with increasing intensity, bring in different routines and activities to decrease boredom and risk of injury. Doing the same thing over and over and over can make you more susceptible to conditions like tendonitis or plantar fasciitis.

Most of all, have fun. If you're doing something you like to do, you're more likely to stick with it, and more likely to see encouraging results that will keep you going.

## 5 BENEFITS OF EXERCISE

- 1 BETTER HEART HEALTH
- 2 MORE FLEXIBILITY
- 3 LESS RISK OF FALLING AS YOU AGE
- 4 STRONGER BONES
- 5 STRESS RELIEF

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Bellin Run** – Green Bay

June 8, 2019 Register at [BellinRun.com](http://BellinRun.com)

➤ **FOR MORE INFORMATION** go to [Bellin.org/calendar](http://Bellin.org/calendar)

