

Bone Health in Cerebral Palsy

Children with cerebral palsy (CP) and limited weight bearing have a high risk of having fragile bones. This is because bones need activity like walking, running, and jumping to make them strong.

Risk factors

Children with CP may be at high risk for having fragile bones if they:

- use wheelchairs
- take medicine for seizures
- are underweight

Protect your child's bones

The best way to protect your child's bones is to make sure they get 3 servings of foods with calcium and vitamin D each day. Good sources include dairy, green leafy vegetables, canned fish, and foods with added Vitamin D and calcium. Formulas your child gets by a feeding tube also contain Vitamin D. Ask your child's dietician if your child is getting enough Vitamin D.

Weight-bearing activities

To keep bones strong, have your child do weight-bearing activity. This includes:

- using a walker or stander
- walking, running, and jumping if your child is able

If your child uses a wheelchair or a device to help them move, their physical therapist can give you ideas for weight-bearing activities.

Other information

- Learn about your child's vitamin D level early. Not enough vitamin D can increase your child's risk for breaking a bone.
- If your child needs more vitamin D or calcium in their diet, their health care provider may order a supplement for them.
- Your child may need blood tests to check their vitamin D level.
- Your child may need a special X-ray to see how strong their bones are.
- If your child has a fracture, they may need to take medicine to prevent future breaks.
- Your child may need to see a bone specialist. Their health care provider will make this referral.