

# Take Charge of Your Health

Osteogenesis imperfecta (OI) is a lifelong disorder. OI changes as people age. There may be fewer fractures, but more problems with tendons, hearing, lungs or heart. The keys to living well with OI are **weight management, healthy diet, appropriate exercise, avoiding illness and maintaining bone mass**. Start taking steps to put yourself in charge of your health today.

1. Know your own OI history.
2. Find a Primary Care Physician and an orthopedist before there is an emergency.
3. Have an annual physical: your basic health needs are the same as a person without OI.
4. Know your medicines; dosage, side effects, and how to take them. Carry a list with you.
5. Know your numbers for Blood Pressure, Bone Density, Cholesterol, and Pulmonary Function.
6. Get routine annual screenings for vision, hearing, and dental care. Fragile teeth require care.
7. Get the pneumonia vaccine and the annual flu shot; you are at risk for lung infections.
8. Seek medical care immediately for every respiratory infection. Respiratory problems are a leading cause of OI related death.
9. Report any changes in pain to your doctor; do not assume "it's just OI."
10. Take care of your general health -- it makes a difference!
  - a. Exercise as possible in a safe and regular manner.
  - b. Maintain a healthy weight; extra weight is a strain on your skeleton and heart.
  - c. Do not smoke and avoid secondhand smoke; smoke harms bones and lungs.
  - d. Follow a healthy diet with adequate amounts of calcium and vitamin D.
  - e. Protect your hearing.
  - f. Use sunscreen; OI makes skin more fragile and a little thinner.
  - g. Develop healthy ways of coping with stress and anxiety.
  - h. Develop a variety of techniques for coping with pain.



*For more information on these topics and others see the OI Foundation website section "Especially For Adults."*

**Osteogenesis Imperfecta Foundation**  
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