

Stronger than Sarcopenia



Starting the Conversation: What to Ask Your Health Care Provider About Sarcopenia

Starting at age 30, the body naturally starts to lose 3–5% of muscle per decade, but you don't have to accept losing strength with age. A condition called **sarcopenia** (saar-ko-pee-ni-uh) may cause trouble with daily activities like standing from a chair, walking, twisting the lid off a jar, or carrying groceries. Over time, sarcopenia can lead to falls or other injuries, loss of independence, and even hospitalization.

The sooner sarcopenia is diagnosed, the sooner you can take steps to stay strong, active, and independent. *Talking to your health care provider about sarcopenia can help you:*

- **Stay safe and independent.** Addressing sarcopenia can lower your risk of falls, injuries, and hospital stays, helping you stay active and live independently longer.
- **Get care that's right for you.** A diagnosis helps your provider create a plan that fits your needs and rules out other causes of muscle loss.
- **Work with specialists.** Your provider may recommend seeing a nutritionist, physical therapist, or other specialists to help you build strength safely.

Talking to Your Health Care Provider

If you're worried about changes in your strength, don't wait. Discussing sarcopenia and strength with your health care provider can help address the condition at the earliest stage and kickstart your journey to rebuilding muscle health. Here are a few ways to bring it up at your next appointment:

- “Could the tiredness or balance issues I've been experiencing be related to sarcopenia?”
- “What can I do to help slow down or reduce muscle loss, or sarcopenia, as I get older?”
- “What can I do to regain muscle strength if I'm already experiencing some muscle weakness?”
- “Should I be concerned about sarcopenia even if I'm active?”
- “Would you recommend any specific dietary or exercise plans to maintain my muscle mass?”
- “Is there anything about my current health conditions or medications that might increase my risk for sarcopenia?”
- “Do you recommend I speak to any specialists about muscle weakness or managing my sarcopenia?”



When to Talk to Your Health Care Provider

Routine appointments are a great time to ask about sarcopenia and ask for a screening, especially:

- **During annual wellness visits:** Ask your provider about topics related to sarcopenia, like strength, balance, and muscle functioning.
- **During perimenopause and menopause discussions:** For women, muscle loss may begin earlier than men due to hormonal midlife changes. Talking about sarcopenia with your provider can encourage early action and prevention.
- **After a recent fall or decreased physical ability:** Mention to your provider if you have noticed new difficulty with everyday tasks.
- **When you have a chronic condition:** Certain chronic conditions, like diabetes, cancer, or cardiovascular disease, are related to a higher risk of sarcopenia. Discuss with your provider how addressing both can help build back muscle strength.

Learn More About Sarcopenia

Staying strong and independent as you age is possible. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health, has created a series of resources that can help you understand sarcopenia and take steps to maintain your strength and muscle health over time.

- **Explore** trusted, easy-to-read resources from the Office on Women's Health to help you stay strong and informed on the [Office on Women's Health sarcopenia page](#).
- **Download** ["What is Sarcopenia"](#) to learn the basics of muscle loss, including symptoms, causes, and how it affects daily life.
- **Find tips** on exercise, nutrition, and treatment options by reading ["Ways to Address Sarcopenia."](#)



Preparing for Your Appointment

Preparing for your appointment can help you feel more confident and ensure that your most important health concerns are addressed. A little planning goes a long way toward getting the care and information you need.

- **Make a List:** Prioritize your concerns clearly before your appointment, addressing the most important issue first.
- **Bring Your Medical Information:** Compile essential details, including medications, supplements, test results, or notes on recent health changes.
- **Voice Your Concerns:** State your primary concern early in the visit to ensure a focused discussion.
- **Follow Up:** Prepare specific questions about symptoms, potential tests, and possible treatments to clarify next steps.

Connect with Us!

To learn more, please visit [womenshealth.gov/sarcopenia](https://www.womenshealth.gov/sarcopenia).

