



# Caring for Children with Fragile Bones

*Your child's health and safety are important to us. You can make a difference in your child's care by asking questions and being actively involved.*

## **What are fragile bones?**

Your child may develop fragile bones, sometimes called low bone density or osteopenia, when the strength or density of their bones is below normal range. Fragile bones can be easily broken or fractured if not handled with care. Premature infants and children on IV nutrition (or feeds) are at greater risk for developing fragile bones due to the lack of calcium being absorbed by the body.

## **What are we doing to protect your child with fragile bones from fractures?**

If your child has fragile bones, their care team will hang a sign above their bed that says "I have fragile bones. Please handle me with care." to remind care providers and visitors. Your child's care team will use specific protective methods when positioning, feeding, diapering, dressing, cleaning, holding, and moving your child. They may also give your child medicines that help their body absorb calcium to strengthen their bones.

## **What can you do to protect your child with fragile bones from fractures?**

To protect your child with fragile bones from fractures/breaks, always use slow, gentle movements when interacting with them. Your child's care team will review steps and movements you can take to safely hold, reposition, feed, clean, dress and diaper your child. Avoid lifting your child by their arms, legs, chest, and underarms. When feeding your child, make sure they are in a flat position and burp them with gentle taps. Two options for safely lifting and holding your child include:

- Option 1: Shoulder holding
  - Bend over your child so that your shoulder touches their upper chest.
  - Slide one hand under your child's head and upper body.
  - Slide your other hand under their bottom.
  - Lift your child toward your shoulder while standing up.
- Option 2: Cradling
  - Spread your fingers and place one hand under your child's head and upper body.
  - Spread your fingers and place your other hand under your child's bottom.
  - Use your forearms to support your child's arms and legs as you lean towards your child and lift them gently to your chest.

**Let your child's care team know if you have any questions or concerns about caring for or handling your child with fragile bones.**