

Know Your Bone Health

What is Osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis is a disease that thins and weakens your bones, making them more fragile. It is treatable and often can be prevented. In many cases, early prevention and treatment can make a big difference.



1 in 2 women and 1 in 4 men over 50 will break a bone due to osteoporosis, according to the Bone Health and Osteoporosis Foundation



Symptoms

People may have no symptoms until their bones break. Once a fracture occurs, the risk of other fractures becomes higher. Symptoms of fractures can be:

- Chronic back pain
- Loss of height
- Severely stooped posture
- Thin, brittle, weak bone
- Immediate pain following a seemingly mild injury

Risk factors

Many people with osteoporosis have several risk factors including but not limited to:

- Thin or small body type
- Broken bones as an adult
- Family history of osteoporosis or fragile bones
- Post-menopause
- Age over 60
- Low calcium and vitamin D intake
- Little or no exercise
- Smoking, excessive alcohol or caffeine intake

Detection and testing

If you are over 50 and have broken a bone, talk to your provider about setting up a Bone Mineral Density (BMD) test. These tests measure bone mass in large bones such as the hip and spine or smaller bones such as the wrist or heel. These quick and painless tests measure bone mass and the three most common tests include a DEXA scan, CT Scan and Ultrasound. DEXA bone density measurements are usually reported as a "T" score. A "T" score is the relationship of the patient's bone density to the bone density of a healthy adult.

Condition	"T" Score
Healthy	Above minus 1 (-1.0)
Osteopenia (low bone mass)	Between minus 1 and minus 2.5 (-1.0 and -2.5)
Osteoporosis	Below minus 2.5 (-2.5)



These tests can also:

- Detect low bone density before a fracture occurs
- Predict the chances of a future fracture
- Confirm diagnosis of osteoporosis if you have a current fracture
- Determine rate of bone loss
- Monitor effects of treatment

Treatment and Prevention

Treatment for osteoporosis includes a focus on:

Nutrition

Calcium and vitamin D are important nutrients for strong bones. The best source of calcium is food. You get vitamin D from sunlight and food. Talk to your doctor about how much calcium and vitamin D you need and whether a supplement may be right for you.

Weight bearing exercise

Regular physical activities such as walking, hiking, jogging, stair climbing are important ways to prevent and treat this disease. Talk to your provider about physical activity that is right for you.

Avoid

Smoking, alcohol and caffeine.

Safety/fall prevention

Check for plenty of lighting to prevent falls. Be sure rugs, lamps, stools, etc. are not in places that could cause falls. Certain medications may increase your risk for falls. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist to better understand your risk for falls.

Talk to your doctor about definitive treatment options for osteoporosis like Bisphosphonates and hormone therapy. Calcium and vitamin D are supplements and help with prevention, but treatment requires further action. Review any concerns with your provider, Do not stop taking medications without discussing with your provider.

Taking charge

Early diagnosis is important, protect your bones and begin osteoporosis prevention now. Assessing your risk, and knowing your bone density is essential to understanding your bone health. Ask your doctor for a bone health assessment, especially if you have one or more of the risk factors listed for osteoporosis.

Find out more

Bone Health and Osteoporosis Foundation

bonehealthandosteoporosis.org

American Bone Health

americanbonehealth.org

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