

Osteoporosis: What is it and who is at risk?

Understanding Osteoporosis

- Osteoporosis is a condition in which bones become weaker and can break more easily.
 - Osteoporosis is common:
 - About 10 million Americans have osteoporosis and another 44 million are at risk for it.
 - 1 in 2 women and 1 in 4 men over the age of 50 will have an osteoporosis-related break during their lifetime.
 - You cannot feel your bones growing weaker, so osteoporosis can sneak up on you.
 - Osteoporosis is serious:
 - Osteoporosis leads to bone breaks which cause pain and keep you from getting around easily and doing the things you enjoy.
 - It can also lead to other health problems. 25% of seniors who break a hip die within a year from health problems connected to bone breaks.
- get calcium and vitamin D in your diet or through appropriate supplements. Add weight bearing exercise to your routine to help you keep the bone strength that you have built.
 - Family history/ethnicity: Heredity also contributes to the risk of developing osteoporosis. If your parents have a history of breaking a hip or being diagnosed with osteoporosis then your risk of developing it is higher as well. People with Caucasian and Asian backgrounds also have a higher risk of developing osteoporosis.
 - Smoking and alcohol use also increase your risk of developing osteoporosis. Not only does smoking increase your risk of heart disease and many types of cancer, it also increases your risk of developing osteoporosis. If you smoke, quit. If you don't smoke, don't start. Avoiding or moderating alcohol use can help you to decrease this risk.
 - Chronic conditions and treatments: Some medical conditions and/or their treatments increase the risk for osteoporosis.
 - o Rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes and celiac disease are just a few of the conditions that can crease your risk for osteoporosis.
 - o Medications taken chronically for treatment of seizures, lung disease, and other chronic conditions can also increase your risk.

Osteoporosis is a disease of the skeleton, and happens when you lose too much bone, make too little bone, or both.

- Up to the age of 25, our bodies form bone. The more bone mass you make early in life, the better protected you will be against osteoporosis when bone loss begins.
- Between 25 and middle age, your bone mass will stay balanced as your bones build, break down, and build again.
- At midlife, bone loss increases. For women, bone loss increases even more after menopause, when estrogen levels drop.

Osteoporosis Risk Factors

- Gender: Just being a woman puts you at increased risk for bone loss. 4 out of 5 people with osteoporosis are women but this is not just a woman's disease. 1 out of 5 (about 2 million) people with osteoporosis are men.
- Age: As we age, we lose bone gradually and our risk of developing osteoporosis increases. It important to

If you have or are being treated for a chronic medical condition, discuss your risks with your doctor, as early screening for osteoporosis may be needed.

Sources:

National Osteoporosis Foundation, What is Osteoporosis and What Causes It?: <https://www.nof.org/patients/what-is-osteoporosis/>.
American Association of Clinical Endocrinology
The World Health Organization
The International Society for Clinical Densitometry

For more information about osteoporosis please visit The National Osteoporosis Foundation online at: www.nof.org/patients/