

Osteoporosis and Fracture Prevention in the Elderly

Information for Patients/Guardians



What is Osteoporosis?

Our skeleton is a vital organ, just like the heart and lungs, and remains active by constantly replacing old bone with new bone. However, this balance can be disrupted by factors such as inactivity, illness, aging, menopause, certain diseases, or specific medications. When more bone is lost than formed, it leads to osteoporosis-thinner, weaker, and more fragile bones-resulting in an increased risk of fractures. This condition can affect both men and women.

Who is at Risk?

- Older adults
- Females
- Thin or underweight individuals
- People with low calcium and vitamin D intake
- Those who are physically inactive
- Smokers or excessive alcohol consumers
- Individuals with a family or personal history of fractures in adulthood
- People with a parental history of osteoporosis or fractures
- Patients with illnesses like rheumatoid arthritis
- Those taking medications such as steroids

Symptoms

Osteoporosis typically has no symptoms, with fractures frequently being the first sign. However, some symptoms may include back pain, loss of height, stooped posture, etc.

Getting Tested for Osteoporosis

Understanding the health of your bones is crucial. If you are at risk, consult your physician. The diagnostic process may include:

- Reviewing your medical history
- Undergoing a physical examination
- Performing laboratory tests and X-rays
- Conducting a bone density scan, such as a DEXA scan, to measure Bone Mineral Density (BMD)

These tests help your healthcare provider assess your fracture risk.

Treatment for Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis can be treated and managed through anti-fracture medications prescribed by your healthcare provider, along with calcium and vitamin D supplements.

Protecting Fragile Bones in Daily Life

Strengthen Your Bones:

- Maintain healthy posture.
- Eat a nutritious diet. Include adequate calcium and vitamin D (e.g., dairy products, fortified cereals, leafy greens).
- Stay active. Engage in age-appropriate exercises as recommended by your doctor.
- Avoid smoking and limit alcohol consumption.

Reduce Your Risk of Falls:

- Wear well-fitted footwear.
- Be mindful of your surroundings and avoid slippery surfaces.
- Remove clutter and tripping hazards (e.g., carpets, rugs, mats).
- Use a non-skid bathmat in the shower.
- Keep a nightlight on in your room when sleeping.
- Use walking aids if advised by your doctor.

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