

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT OSTEOPOROSIS

In the Clinic
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What Is Osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis is a disease that reduces the density of bones, which can cause them to weaken. Weak bones can easily break. These breaks, sometimes called fractures, can be painful and may make it hard to take care of yourself. The risk for osteoporosis increases with age.

Who Should Be Screened?

- All women aged 65 years or older.
- Women younger than 65 years may need screening if they have certain risk factors, including low weight, smoking cigarettes, and history of bone fractures. Talk to your doctor about other risks you may have.

How Is It Diagnosed?

- Your doctor can check for bone loss using a test called a DXA scan. This test takes pictures of your bones.
- If your DXA results are below a certain number, your doctor may diagnose you with osteoporosis and you may need treatment.

How Is It Treated?

- There are medicines for osteoporosis called bisphosphonates that help prevent fractures.
- They are usually taken for at least 5 years.
- After 5 years, you may have another DXA scan and your treatment may change.

How Can It Be Prevented?

- Keep a healthy body weight.
- Eat enough protein.



- Avoid drinking heavily.
- Don't smoke.
- Exercise regularly.
- Eat foods with calcium and vitamin D. These include dairy, tofu, leafy greens, and fatty fish like salmon.

Questions for My Doctor

- How do I know if I am at risk for osteoporosis?
- Should I take calcium or vitamin D supplements?
- I was diagnosed with osteoporosis. Can I still do the things I like to do?
- Should I make changes to my diet?
- What can I do to prevent falls?
- What side effects does the medicine have?
- How much will the medicine cost?
- Will my osteoporosis ever go away?
- What happens if I stop taking the medicine?

For More Information



National Osteoporosis Foundation

www.nof.org

American College of physicians

www.acponline.org/patient_ed/rheumatology

Medline Plus

www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/osteoporosis.html