

Dear Patient

Osteoporosis

WHAT IS OSTEOPOROSIS ?

A gradual loss of the calcium stored in our bones is part of the normal aging process. However, in some individuals, rapid or severe loss of calcium can cause excessive bone brittleness making the bones highly susceptible to damage and resistant to healing. This process is known as Osteoporosis.

Bones develop and strengthen in our early years, reaching a peak at about the age of 30. After this time, the bone cells which provide the internal structure of most bones begin to lose more calcium than they absorb. This process is accelerated during and after the menopause years.

The good news is that Osteoporosis is preventable and even, to a degree, reversible. Weight bearing exercise stimulates bone cells to become more active and less susceptible to calcium loss.

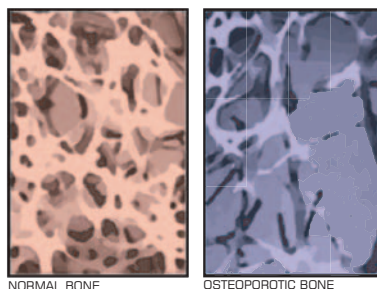
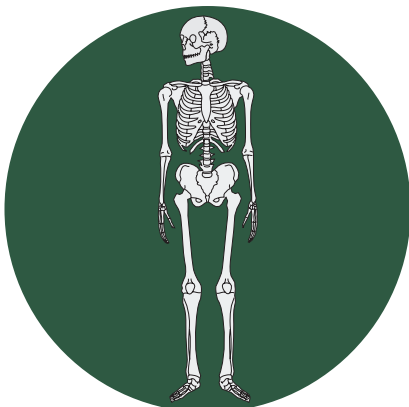
AM I AT RISK ?

You could be at risk of Osteoporosis if you -

- Perform little or no weight bearing exercise
- Consume insufficient calcium
- Have a family history of weak or brittle bones
- Have fair skin and a fine bone structure
- Consume large quantities of alcohol
- Smoke
- Are menopausal or post menopausal

HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE OSTEOPOROSIS ?

A bone density test can be performed by your doctor. Many people do not find out that they have osteoporosis until they break a bone!



A gradual loss of calcium from our bones occurs with age

KEY FACTORS

- Use gravity to stimulate bone strengthening through exercise.
- Eat a calcium rich diet including dairy foods, green leafy vegetables, tinned fish and soy products.
- Ask your doctor about hormone replacement therapy and other medication which may assist.

WHAT TYPE OF EXERCISE IS SAFE FOR ME ?

In older adults, exercise should be carefully prescribed because of a higher risk of musculoskeletal injuries. Exercise should be performed in standing whenever possible to make use of the loading gravity provides which stimulates bone strengthening. Aerobic exercise which keeps your heart, lungs and circulation in good order should form part of the exercise programme as should strengthening and flexibility exercises.

Ask your physiotherapist if they can recommend a training facility which specialises in Osteoporosis Prevention Exercise Programmes.



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