

October 20th is World Osteoporosis Day

Osteoporosis is a condition that weakens bones, making them fragile and more likely to break. Osteoporosis is defined as a bone density T score of -2.5 or below.

Causes:

A decrease in estrogen in women at the time of menopause and a decrease in testosterone in men are major causes of bone loss. Bone mass (bone density) decreases after 35 years of age, and bone loss occurs more rapidly in women after menopause. After the age of 35, both men and women will normally lose 0.3%-0.5% of their bone density per year as part of the aging process.

Other causes of bone loss include:

-  Being confined to a bed.
-  Certain medical conditions.
-  Taking certain medicines.

Other risk factors include:

-  Absence of menstrual periods (amenorrhea) for long periods of time.
-  A family history of osteoporosis.
-  Drinking a large amount of alcohol, smoking.
-  Low body weight : BMI of 19 or less.
-  A parental history of hip fracture.
-  ALong-term use of high-dose oral corticosteroids (widely used for conditions such as arthritis and asthma).
-  Rheumatoid arthritis.
-  Malabsorption problems, as experienced in coeliac disease and crohn's disease.
-  Some medications used to treat breast cancer and prostate cancer which affect hormone levels.

Sites:

The spine, hips, ribs, and wrists are common areas of bone fractures from osteoporosis although osteoporosis-related fractures can occur in almost any skeletal bone. Fracture can be either in the form of cracking (as in a hip fracture) or collapsing (as in a compression fracture of the vertebrae of the spine).

The problem:

During the first five to 10 years after menopause, women can suffer up to 2%-4% loss of bone density per year! This can result in the loss of up to 25%-30% of their bone density during that time period.

Osteoporotic bone fractures are responsible for considerable pain, decreased quality of life, lost workdays, and disability. Osteoporosis has even been linked with an increased risk of death. Some 20% of women with a hip fracture will die in the subsequent year as an indirect result of the fracture. About 20% of postmenopausal women who

experience a vertebral fracture will suffer a new vertebral fracture of bone in the following year. Up to 30% of patients suffering a hip fracture will require long-term nursing-home care. Only one-third of hip-fracture patients regain their pre-fracture level of function.

Who should have bone density testing?

- 🔗 All postmenopausal women below age 65 who have risk factors for osteoporosis.
- 🔗 All women aged 65 and older.
- 🔗 Postmenopausal women with fractures.
- 🔗 You may want to talk to your doctor about osteoporosis if you went through early menopause, took corticosteroids for several months at a time or have a family history of hip fractures.

Coping and support:

The idea that your bones aren't as strong as they used to be can be frightening. You may find that talking to other people who also have osteoporosis can be encouraging and helpful. Ask your doctor if he or she knows of any support groups in your area.

Prevention:

The factors essential for keeping your bones healthy throughout your life are:

- 🔗 Adequate amounts of calcium.
- 🔗 Adequate amounts of vitamin D.
- 🔗 Regular exercise.
- 🔗 Do not drink large amounts of alcohol.
- 🔗 Do not smoke.
- 🔗 Get regular exercise.

Treatment:

- 🔗 Lifestyle changes.
- 🔗 Medications that stop bone loss.
- 🔗 Medications that increase bone formation.

Reference Links:

- 🔗 <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Osteoporosis/Pages/Causes.aspx>
- 🔗 <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/osteoporosis/basics/prevention/con-20019924>
- 🔗 <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0001400/>
- 🔗 <http://www.onhealth.com/osteoporosis/article.htm>
- 🔗 <http://www.onhealth.com/osteoporosis>

For any enquiry or assistance please contact: wellness@medicaretpa.co.in

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