

Osteoporosis is a disease that causes bones to become weak, brittle, and increasingly susceptible to fractures. The loss of bone density generally occurs with age, as old bone deteriorates more quickly than new bone can be created. Currently in the United States, an estimated 10 million people suffer from osteoporosis, and nearly 34 million people have low bone mass and are considered to be at increased risk for the disease as a result. Of the 44 million Americans affected by osteoporosis, 80% are women.

## RISK FACTORS

- ✗ Being female
- ✗ Aging
- ✗ A family history of osteoporosis
- ✗ Having a small or thin frame
- ✗ Low intake of calcium and/or vitamin D
- ✗ Sedentary lifestyle

# THE BARE BONES OF OSTEOPOROSIS

## PREVENT OSTEOPOROSIS

Although the majority of bone mass is built during childhood and adolescence, there are steps you can take as an adult to prevent osteoporosis. Consider the following suggestions from the National Osteoporosis Foundation to optimize bone health.

- ✓ Get the daily recommended amounts of calcium and vitamin D
- ✓ Engage in regular weight-bearing and muscle-strengthening exercise
- ✓ Avoid smoking and excessive alcohol
- ✓ Talk to your health care provider about bone health
- ✓ Have a bone density test and take medication when appropriate

## THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY DETECTION AND TREATMENT

Untreated, osteoporosis can lead to a fracture, or broken bone. Although fractures can affect any bone in the body, the most common sites of fractures are the wrist, hip, and spine. Hip fractures often result in hospitalization and surgery, and spine fractures can cause severe pain and in some cases, deformity. Fortunately, osteoporosis is a treatable disease.

A bone mineral density (BMD) test is a painless, non-invasive way to measure bone density in various bones including the hip, forearm, heel, finger, and wrist. Generally, the lower the bone density, the higher the risk for fracture. A bone density test can detect osteoporosis before a fracture occurs; predict the chances of a future fracture; determine the rate of bone loss; and determine response to treatment for the disease.

**Consult a physician to determine when bone density testing might be beneficial for you.**



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