

Focus ON JOINTS

FACTS AND INFORMATION ABOUT JOINT HEALTH

Get the FACTS on Osteoporosis



***What is it?
Are you at risk?***

Osteoporosis, or porous bone, is a condition that causes low bone mass and structural deterioration of bones. This means that it leads to fragile

bones. People with osteoporosis are susceptible to fractures of the hip, spine and wrist although the disease can affect any bone in the body. Once a bone fractures, osteoporosis is often extremely painful and crippling.

Osteoporosis is often called the "silent disease" because bone loss occurs without symptoms. People may not know that they have it until their bones become so weak that a sudden strain, bump or fall causes a broken bone. Broken bones in the back, called collapsed vertebrae, may first take the form of severe back pain, loss of height or stooped posture.

FIVE STEPS TOWARDS PREVENTION

There are five steps, which can optimize bone health and help prevent osteoporosis. They are:

- Eating a balanced diet rich in calcium and vitamin D
- Doing resistance-training and weight-bearing exercises
- Living a healthy lifestyle that includes no smoking or excessive alcohol
- Talking with your doctor about bone health
- Having bone density testing done, as recommended



THE RISK FACTORS

Certain people are more likely to develop osteoporosis than others. Risk factors that increase the chances of developing osteoporosis include:

- Female
- Thin and/or small frame
- Advanced age
- Family history of the disease
- Post menopausal
- Abnormal absence of menstrual periods
- Anorexia nervosa
- Using certain medications (corticosteroids or anticonvulsants, for instance)
- In men, low testosterone levels
- Presence of certain chronic medical conditions
- Low lifetime calcium intake
- Inactive lifestyle
- Cigarette smoking
- Excessive use of alcohol

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EXERCISE AND OSTEOPOROSIS

Choosing the right exercises and performing them correctly can help treat or prevent osteoporosis. Just be sure to check with your doctor before starting any exercise program.

Good Choices

Weight-bearing activities, strength training and back-strengthening exercises are all good choices for osteoporosis. Weight-bearing activities can be done every day. For strength training, aim for at least two days a week, but no more than four in order to get the maximum benefit. You can do back stretches daily, but if you do back-strengthening exercises, follow the guidelines for strength training. Don't work the same back muscles on consecutive days.

Low Bone Density

If you have low bone density or already have osteoporosis, there are certain movements that could be harmful because of the stress they put on your spine. These movements include:

- Heavy lifting
- Forward bending
- Twisting
- High-impact activities

Sometimes you can't avoid these movements, but always use caution when doing them in order to decrease your risk of injury.



Common MYTHS About Osteoporosis

There is a lot of information going around about osteoporosis. Some of it is wrong. Below is a list of common misconceptions.

These statements are NOT true:

- Osteoporosis is an inevitable part of aging
- Only older women get osteoporosis
- Only Caucasian women get osteoporosis
- Osteoporosis is not very common
- Osteoporosis isn't a serious or deadly condition
- If I had osteoporosis, I would know it
- Once I have osteoporosis, there is nothing I can do about it

To get the real facts, visit the National Osteoporosis Foundation's web site at www.nof.org.



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