

Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis causes the bones to become brittle and weak. They become so brittle that a simple fall or mild stress like coughing or bending over can cause the bones to fracture. Fractures related to osteoporosis often occur in the wrist, hip or spine.

Bones are living tissues, which are constantly being replaced and absorbed. It occurs when the new bone creation cannot keep up with the old bone removal. Osteoporosis can affect people of all different races. Asian and white women tend to be the most commonly affected, especially those women who are post-menopausal. Healthy diets, medications and weight-bearing exercises are great at helping to prevent bone loss and strengthen those bones that are already weak.

Osteoporosis Anatomy

The skeletal system is made up of all the joints and bones in the body. All of the bones are a complex group of living organs that are composed of multiple cells, protein fibers and a range of minerals. The skeleton serves as a scaffold by delivering protection and support for the soft tissues that make up the remainder of the body. The system provides a series of attachment points that allow the muscles to move at the joints.

New blood cells are generated by the red bone marrow that is inside of the bones. The bones act as the warehouse for the body's calcium, energy and iron in the form of fat. The skeleton continues growing throughout childhood and serves as a framework for the remainder of the body to continue growing along with it.

How to Treat Osteoporosis:

1. Medication

There are many medications that can help the re-absorption of minerals into the bone. You should discuss with your GP what you can take. There are those medications which increase bone density, and those medications that stop the loss of bone density. Bisphosphinates such as alendronic acid (e.g. Fosamax) are one of the most commonly taken medications for osteoporosis. Always look up the side-effects of such medication.

2. Supplementation

Supplements can also help, such as vitamin D and calcium. However, eating a balanced diet is key as we should be able to get all the nutrients we need from food.

3. Hormone Related Therapy

Estrogen, especially when begun following menopause, will help to maintain overall bone density. On the other hand, estrogen therapy also increases a woman's chance of getting blood clots, breast cancer, endometrial cancer and even heart disease.

Evista mimics the benefits of estrogen's effects on bone density for those who are postmenopausal, without all of the risks associated with estrogen. In taking this drug, it can also help to reduce the chance of certain types of breast cancer. Hot flashes tend to be one of the most common side effects of this medication. Raloxifene might increase the chance of blood clots as well.

For men, osteoporosis is often linked with a gradual decline related to age for their testosterone levels. Testosterone replacement therapy can also help to increase overall bone density, but medications are best studies for men who have osteoporosis.

Tips:

- Women and men between 18 and 50 years of age need 1,000 milligrams of calcium on a daily basis. Once women turn 50 and men turn 70, the amount rises to 1,200 milligrams per day.
- Vitamin D is crucial for your body to be able to absorb calcium. Many people are able to get the recommended amount of Vitamin D from the sun, but that cannot always be depended upon.
- Exercise helps you to slow down bone loss and build strong bones.
- Those who have a smaller body frame are at an increased risk of developing osteoporosis because there isn't enough bone mass to use as they grow older.
- If you have a sibling or parent with the condition, the chance of you getting it tend to increase.