

OSTEOPOROSIS



SUPPORTS

LOCAL CHARITIES

What is Osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis is a disease in which bones become fragile and are more likely to fracture. If left untreated, osteoporosis can progress painlessly until a bone breaks. Fractures usually occur in the hip, spine and wrist. 1 in 3 women and 1 in 12 men are at risk of this disease.

All bones can be affected, but hip and spine fractures cause the most concern. A hip fracture almost always requires surgery and a long convalescence. It can inhibit being able to walk unassisted and may even cause permanent disability, or even death. Spinal fractures also have serious consequences, including loss of height, severe back pain and deformity.

What are the Symptoms?

Osteoporosis is often called the 'silent disease' because bone loss occurs without symptoms. Usually people only know that they have osteoporosis when their bones become so weak that a sudden strain, bump or fall causes a fracture to a hip or wrist or a vertebrae to collapse.

Collapsed vertebrae may initially be felt as severe back pain, height loss or spinal deformities such as a curving of the spine or stooped posture.



IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE YOU!

What Causes Osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis is caused by a lack of oestrogen – the female sex hormone – which protects the bones and the heart. If not enough bone is made during youth, the natural process of bone loss over the years will influence the risk factors in developing osteoporosis.

After the menopause, less oestrogen is produced by the ovaries, increasing bone loss. Hence, osteoporosis is more common in women; however, men who lack testosterone can also develop osteoporosis for the same reasons. Women can lose up to 20% of their bone mass in the 5-7 years after menopause.

What are the Risk Factors?

Certain people are more likely to develop osteoporosis than others. These are the most common risk factors:

- Being female.
- Thin and/or small frame
- Advanced age
- A family history of osteoporosis
- Post menopause, including early or surgically induced menopause.
- Abnormal absence of menstrual periods.
- Anorexia nervosa or bulimia.
- A diet low in calcium.
- Use of certain medications, such as corticosteroids and anticonvulsants.
- Low testosterone levels in men.
- An inactive lifestyle.
- Cigarette smoking.
- Excessive use of alcohol.

How Can I Prevent Osteoporosis?

By about the age of 20, the average woman has acquired 98% of her skeletal mass. Building strong bones during childhood and adolescence can be the best defence against developing osteoporosis. A healthy lifestyle can also be critically important for keeping bones strong.

The following can help prevent osteoporosis:

- Eat a well balanced diet, rich in calcium and vitamin D

- Do weight-bearing exercises daily e.g. walking, golf, tennis.
- Have a healthy lifestyle (no smoking, caffeine and moderate alcohol).
- Ask your GP about bone density testing.
- Visit your Chiropractor for maintenance check-ups every 6 months.

What if I have Osteoporosis?

Although there is no cure for osteoporosis, there are steps you can take to slow its progress. Doctors recommend 1,000 mg of calcium a day for women on oestrogen replacement therapy and 1,500 mg of calcium daily for women not receiving oestrogen therapy.

While exercise is good for someone with osteoporosis, it should not put any sudden or excessive strain on your bones. Care should be taken when lifting heavy objects, such as bags of shopping, children etc. If you have osteoporosis, it is important to minimize your chances of breaking a bone. Take steps to prevent falls. As extra protection against fractures, your Chiropractor can recommend specific exercises to strengthen and support your back. With an increased research effort, the future for osteoporosis prevention and treatment is promising.

We Care About the Community

Please give this to a friend or colleague if you think Chiropractic may help them.

Have them call us on 01276 21637

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