

Osteoporosis in Men

What is osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis (AH-stee-oh-puh-RO-sis) is a condition that weakens bones. This increases the risk of broken bones (fractures). More than 2 million American men have osteoporosis. Men older than 70 years are more likely to have it.

Who is at risk?

You are at risk of osteoporosis if you have a parent or sibling with it. Other risks include poor nutrition, low body weight, smoking, drinking a lot of alcohol, and low testosterone levels. Taking certain medicines, such as steroids, may increase your risk of osteoporosis.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms include fractures, loss of height, stooped posture, and back pain. Often there are no symptoms in the early stages of osteoporosis.

How is it diagnosed?

Your doctor will examine you and ask about your symptoms. You may need a DEXA scan, which is a test that measures bone thickness.

How can I prevent it?

To prevent osteoporosis, it helps to quit smoking and have less than two alcoholic drinks daily.

Regular exercise helps make your bones stronger. If you do not get enough calcium and vitamin D to help prevent osteoporosis, your doctor may prescribe supplements. Foods high in calcium include milk products, leafy green vegetables, sardines, salmon, tofu, and almonds. Most people can get enough vitamin D from being in direct sunlight for 10 to 15 minutes, two or three times weekly.

How is it treated?

Some medicines can help reduce the risk of fractures in men with osteoporosis. These medicines may also help prevent osteoporosis in people who need long-term steroid treatment for another condition. Hormone replacement can help if you have low testosterone levels.

Where can I get more information?

Your family doctor

National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases
Telephone: 1-877-22-NIAMS (1-877-226-4267)
Web site: <http://www.niams.nih.gov>

National Osteoporosis Foundation
Telephone: 1-800-231-4222
Web site: <http://www.nof.org>

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This handout is provided to you by your family doctor and the American Academy of Family Physicians. Other health-related information is available from the AAFP online at <http://familydoctor.org>.

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