

MEN'S RISK FACTORS

While you may look and feel fine, you could be at risk for osteoporosis and not know it.

Print this sheet and check off the risk factors that apply to you. Then talk to your doctor about osteoporosis and ask whether a Bone Density Test may be right for you.

Do you have decreased testosterone levels?

Low levels of the male sex hormone testosterone can contribute to bone loss.

Do you have low bone mass as confirmed by a bone density test?

Bone Density Test results are reported as T-scores. T-scores reflect a measure of bone strength adjusted for age, that is, they compare your bone density with that of normal young adult men. Normal bones are healthy and strong. Bones weakened by osteoporosis have become thin, making them more likely to break.

Do you have a family history of osteoporosis or broken bones from minimal trauma?

In part, susceptibility to fracture may be hereditary. If a parent or grandparent was diagnosed with osteoporosis, you might also be at increased risk—for example, people whose parents have a history of vertebral fractures seem to have reduced bone mass. A personal history of a fracture with minimal trauma as an adult also increases your fracture risk.

Do you have a low body weight?

Men with low body weight are at higher risk of osteoporosis than men with high body weight.

Do you use certain medications, such as steroids (e.g., for asthma or arthritis) or thyroid hormone?

A significant and often overlooked risk factor in the development of osteoporosis is the use of certain medications to treat chronic medical conditions.

Medications used to treat rheumatoid arthritis, an underactive thyroid, seizure disorders, and gastrointestinal disorders may have side effects that can increase bone loss and lead to osteoporosis.

Some of these medications are:

1. Steroids: This class of drugs can cause bone to be removed faster than it is formed, so bone loss occurs and bones become weaker. Therefore, maintaining bone mass is important to keep your bones healthy. Medicines such as cortisone or prednisone are used to treat a variety of conditions, such as rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, autoimmune diseases, asthma, and transplantations.
2. Thyroid hormones (excessive)
3. Seizure medicine (anticonvulsants)

4. Antacids containing aluminum
5. Methotrexate for cancer treatment and autoimmune disorders
6. Heparin which is used to prevent blood clots
7. Cholestyramine taken to control blood cholesterol levels

For many people, these are life-saving or life-enhancing drugs. That's why it is important to discuss the use of these medications with your physician and not stop or alter your medication dose on your own.

Do you smoke?

Smoking is a risk factor for bone loss and thus can weaken your bones.

Do you drink several alcoholic beverages per day?

Increased alcohol intake can reduce bone formation and is associated with increased risk of fracture.

Do you consume too little calcium or vitamin D?

Calcium and vitamin D are important in health. They are vital while your bones are still growing, generally until about age 30. Even if you are taking medicine for osteoporosis, it is important that your dietary intake of calcium and vitamin D is adequate. If not, you should talk to your healthcare professional about the need for supplements.

Do you exercise infrequently?

Inactivity makes your bones lose strength and become thinner. Over time, thin bones may break. Men who aren't active or have decreased muscle strength are at increased risk for osteoporosis. Be sure to talk to your doctor before starting any exercise program.

Print this page if you have checked any of the boxes above. Then take the results to your doctor.