

Osteoporosis

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Osteoporosis is a bone disease that results in increased bone weakness and an increased risk of breaking a bone. Osteoporosis is especially prevalent in women that has undergone menopause. Bones that commonly break are the bones in the forearm, wrists and the hip bones. Bones may be weakened to such an extent that it breaks due to minor stress. A broken bone may be followed by chronic pain and a decreased ability to carry out normal activities.

Risk factors

There are various risk factors of osteoporosis and resultant bone fractures:

- Genetics – Family history
- Menopause
- Being female
- Increase in age
- Excessive alcohol us
- Vitamin D deficiency
- Cigarette smoking
- Malnutrition & being underweight
- Doing little physical activity
- Endocrine disorders
- Eating disorders
- Arthritis
- Kidney diseases
- Long term steroid use (medication)

Symptoms

Osteoporosis can lead to bone fractures, pain, a decrease in mobility and a decreases quality of life. It will however rarely lead to death.

Causes

The fractures that occur due to osteoporosis are usually a result of someone falling. The risk of falling can increase due to impaired eyesight, balance disorders, seizures, dementia and other reasons.



Prevention

Osteoporosis can be prevented by eating a balanced diet, exercising and not smoking or drinking alcohol. Osteoporosis can also be prevented by decreasing the fall risk of a person, especially the elderly, by for example removing any carpets in their house and ensuring that they have glasses that correct their eyesight optimally.

Diagnosis

The diagnosis of osteoporosis are done with medical imaging and measuring the bone mineral density of your bone. Blood tests can also be done to look for possible causes of the osteoporosis. Fractures can be identified with medical imaging, such as X-rays.

Treatment

Bone fractures can be treated by demobilizing the bone and with surgery. Osteoporosis in itself can be treated by decreasing your risk factors (see prevention) and with various supplements (Calcium- Milk, Vitamin D- Sunlight) and medications, such as hormone replacement therapies. These medications can be prescribed by a doctor.

