



What is Osteoporosis?

When the body stops replacing the components of your bones quickly or they get lost very soon (or both), Osteoporosis occurs. According to estimation, over 25 million Indians may be affected by this condition. While women are at a higher risk for the disease, men can also develop it. Among those who are 50 years old or more, up to 1 in 2 women and up to 1 in 4 men is likely to break a bone due to Osteoporosis.

But Osteoporosis is preventable. Your doctor can diagnose and treat it before it causes a broken bone. Even after a fracture, further complications can be avoided by taking the right steps.

What is Osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis is often called the silent disease because it may not cause any symptoms. Some patients may experience the following symptoms:

- Bone and muscle pain, particularly in the back if a fracture has occurred
- Broken bones (mainly hips, spine or wrists), even from minor falls or bumps
- Collapsed vertebrae — leading to severe pain, a decrease in height or a spine deformity

Such symptoms can also come from other bone disorders or medical problems. Always consult your doctor for a diagnosis.



What is Osteoporosis?

While the exact cause of Osteoporosis remains unknown, several factors appear to increase the risk of developing the disease:

- **Age:** Risk increases after 50 years of age
- **Gender:** Women are four times more likely to develop this disease
- **Race:** The disease can affect anyone, but White and Asian women are more at risk
- **Menopause:** Estrogen deficiency (female sex hormones that are produced by the ovary) that results in menopause can also cause bone loss

- Family history of bone disease
- Low body weight, or being small and thin
- Not getting enough Calcium or Vitamin D
- Not eating enough fruits and vegetables for other nutrients
- Not getting enough protein
- Consuming too much alcohol, sodium or caffeine
- Smoking
- Having an inactive lifestyle

Certain medications (e.g. prednisone) and diseases can also cause bone loss and increase the risk for Osteoporosis.

How is Osteoporosis prevented?

If you're a woman who has gone through menopause or a man older than age 50, your doctor will:

- Talk to you about your risk of Osteoporosis and related fractures
- Recommend a diet rich in fruits and vegetables that includes adequate Vitamin D and Calcium along with necessary supplements
- Recommend regular weight-bearing and muscle-strengthening exercise
- Assess the risk of falling and offer appropriate prevention
- Ask whether you smoke and how much alcohol you drink
- Measure your height each year

How to diagnose Osteoporosis?

A Bone Density Test (also called bone densitometry or DXA) involves a special X-ray machine and is the only way for the doctors to find out whether you have Osteoporosis.

Your doctor will order this test if you are:

- A woman 65 years of age and older
- A man 70 years of age and older
- A post-menopausal woman with risk factors for Osteoporosis
- A man aged between 50-69 years with risk factors for Osteoporosis
- A patient who has a fractured bone, and shown to have risk for Osteoporosis
- Measure your height each year

Bone density tests can also identify patients with Osteopenia — decreased bone mass that has not yet reached the level of Osteoporosis. Ask your doctor if you should get tested.

Your doctor will physically examine you; gather family and personal history from you to ascertain the risk for Osteoporosis; use certain tools to estimate your risk of a fracture and order few other tests to confirm the diagnosis of Osteoporosis and plan the treatment.

How is Osteoporosis treated?

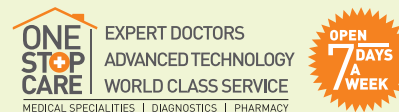
Early treatment can ease pain; limit or halt bone loss, and prevent fractures. Appropriate treatment can also help avoid another injury that can result in a fracture. Doctors recommend treatments based on:

- Your age, overall health and medical history
- Your gender
- Extent of the disease and how it's likely to progress
- Your tolerance for specific medications, procedures or therapies
- Your opinion or preference

Doctor, Physiotherapist and the Dietician will also recommend changes to the diet and lifestyle. There are a number of injections, IV infusions, tablets, nasal sprays and patches — all shown to reduce fractures. Your doctor will explain the advantages of different medications used in the treatment and also discuss their possible side effects.



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OSTEOPOROSIS AND ITS TREATMENT

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