



# POSTMENOPAUSAL OSTEOPOROSIS

## What is osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis is a disease in which bones become weak. Osteoporotic bones are more likely to fracture (break), mostly at the wrists, hip and spine.

## Why is osteoporosis worrisome?

Osteoporosis causes bones to become weak and fragile, so that they break easily – even as a result of a minor fall, a bump, a sneeze, or a sudden movement. Fractures caused by osteoporosis can be debilitating and life-threatening and a major cause of pain and long-term disability.

## Are women at greater risk of osteoporosis after menopause? Why?

Yes, women are at greater risk of osteoporosis after menopause. Estrogen is a bone protective hormone. It acts mainly on the cells which eat up our bones called osteoclasts and keep them suppressed. When estrogen levels drop at menopause, these cells become active and eat up our bones and make it weak and porous with holes inside it.

## Should a woman be routinely screened for osteoporosis after menopause and how?

Osteoporosis is a silent disease because you cannot feel your bones weakening. You may not know you have osteoporosis until you break a bone, usually at hip, wrist or spine. Therefore, routine screening of postmenopausal women for osteoporosis is very important. The best screening test is a bone density test called the "DEXA scan." It is a special kind of X-ray. FRAX tool can check your risk of fracture in next 10 years.

## How can a woman reduce her risk of fractures?

An optimal diet including enough protein as well as calcium and vitamin D, exercises like weight bearing (walking, jogging) and resistance training (lifting mild weights) can decrease fracture risk. Taking measures to prevent falls are very important to decrease the risk of fractures.

## Who should I consult for osteoporosis and what are the treatment options?

If you have osteoporosis or are at risk of osteoporosis, then you should consult an Endocrinologist. Treatment options include oral tablets or injections and depend on the severity, fracture risk and other diseases. Menopausal hormonal therapy can be a good option at the time of menopause. Your endocrinologist can discuss the various options and prescribe the treatment which suits you the best.

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