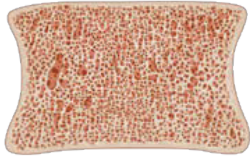
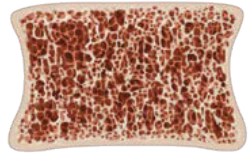


## What is it?

Osteoporosis is a disease characterized by reduced bone strength due to low bone mass and reduced bone quality. The disease causes bones to become weak and fragile, leaving them susceptible to fractures from simple, everyday activities. Osteoporosis can progress painlessly over many years until a fracture occurs.



Normal Bone



Osteoporotic Bone

Though any bone in the body can be affected, fractures of the hip and spine are of special concern. A hip fracture almost always requires hospitalization and major surgery. It can impair a person's ability to walk and may cause prolonged or permanent disability. Fractures in the spine may also have serious consequences including loss of height, severe back pain, increased rounding of the back, and in severe cases, impingement of the spinal cord or nerves.

## Sources and additional information:

National Osteoporosis Foundation:  
[www.nof.org](http://www.nof.org)

All About Back and Neck Pain:  
[www.allaboutbackandneckpain.com](http://www.allaboutbackandneckpain.com)

International Osteoporosis Foundation:  
[www.iofbonehealth.org](http://www.iofbonehealth.org)

National Institute of Health:  
[www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov)



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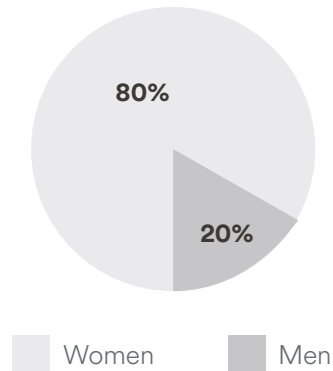
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# Understanding Osteoporosis



## Who is affected?

It is estimated that over 40 million Americans have either osteoporosis or low bone mass that puts them at risk for a fracture. Of those affected by osteoporosis, 80% are women.



A person has a greater risk of developing osteoporosis if someone in their immediate family has had the disease. In addition, Caucasian and Asian populations are also at a higher risk.

According to the International Osteoporosis Foundation, 1 in 3 women and 1 in 5 men over the age of 50 will experience an osteoporotic fracture.



## How is it diagnosed?

Early diagnosis is essential in preventing fractures associated with osteoporosis. Bone mineral density (BMD) tests can measure bone density at various sites of the body. These tests are painless. Many experts recommend a type of BMD test using a central DXA (dual energy x-ray absorptiometry) scanner, which measures density in the spine and hip. Other scanning techniques that measure peripheral sites such as the wrist, fingers or heel can also be effective.

A BMD test performed using a central DXA scanner can:

- Determine if a person has low bone density before a fracture occurs
- Determine if a person's bones are losing density or staying the same when the test is repeated at intervals of one year or more
- Assess the chances that a person will have a fracture in the future
- Help an individual and their health care provider decide if treatment is needed

Medicare may cover a bone density measurement for a patient once every 2 years. However, more frequent measurement may be covered if it is determined to be medically necessary.

## How can I maximize my bone health?

While some risk factors are out of your control, there are certain lifestyle choices that may reduce your risk of developing osteoporosis or prevent further bone loss:

- Get the daily recommended amounts of calcium and vitamin D.
- Engage in regular weight-bearing and muscle-strengthening exercise.
- Avoid smoking and excessive alcohol consumption.
- Talk to your health care provider about bone health.
- Have a bone density test performed and follow the treatment your health care provider recommends. If you are diagnosed with osteoporosis, your doctor can prescribe certain medications to stop or reverse bone loss and help reduce your risk of fracture.