

Patient information

Osteoporosis

If you have osteoporosis, it means that you have lost some bone material. The bones become less dense and more 'honeycombed'. This makes them more prone to break. Osteoporosis mainly affects older people and can affect anyone. However, some people have an increased risk of developing osteoporosis. You can take measures to prevent or slow down bone loss. If you have osteoporosis, drugs can help to restore the bone.

Understanding Bones and Osteoporosis

Bone is made of collagen fibers and minerals. Bone is a living tissue and contains cells that make and mould bone. After the age of 45, you lose a certain amount of bone material. The bones become less dense and strong. The amount of bone loss can vary, if you have a lot of bone loss; then you have osteoporosis. If you have osteoporosis, you have bones that will break more easily than normal, especially after an injury.

How common is Osteoporosis?

Women lose bone material more rapidly than men especially after the menopause when the level of estrogen falls. Estrogen is a female hormone and helps to protect against bone loss. By the age of 70 some women have lost 30% of their bone material. In the UK, about half of women and about 1 in 5 men over the age of 50 will fracture a bone, many as a result of osteoporosis.

Who is at Risk of Osteoporosis?

All men and women have some risk of developing osteoporosis and they become older, particularly over the age of 60. Women are at more risk than men. The following situations also increase the risk of developing bone loss and osteoporosis.

If You:

- Are a woman and have had your menopause before the age of 45
- Have already had a fractured bone
- Have a strong family history of osteoporosis
- Have a BMI of 19 or less
- Have taken or are taking a steroid medicine for three months or more
- Smoke
- Have a lack of Calcium and/or Vitamin D
- Not doing regular exercise
- Have or had certain medical conditions that can affect bones. For example, an overactive thyroid, Cushing's disease and any condition that causes poor mobility

How is Osteoporosis diagnosed?

Your GP or any other health professional may ask you questions, to see how many risk factors listed apply to you. If you may be a risk, you may be referred for a DEXA Scan. DEXA stands for Dual Energy X-Ray Absorptiometry. It is a scan that uses special X-Ray machines that can check the bone density and confirm osteoporosis. However, osteoporosis is often first diagnosed when you fracture a bone.

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (formerly DisabledGo) <https://www.accessable.co.uk>



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