



An Osteoporosis Primer

Your health is important.

Because the Youens and Duchicela Clinic believes this, the following is brought to you in an effort to provide wellness information that you can use to help manage and maintain your health.

This week, the focus is on bone health and osteoporosis.

Osteoporosis is a disease in which bones become weak and brittle, primarily due to low levels of calcium, phosphorus, and other minerals. Osteoporosis can also be caused by a lack of vitamin D, rheumatoid arthritis, hyperthyroidism, chronic kidney disease, premature menopause, among others.

Bones form the structure of the body, so certainly keeping them strong is important to maintaining overall wellness.

According to the National Osteoporosis Foundation, the disease is a major public health threat for an estimated 44 million Americans, or 55 percent of people 50 years of age and older. While it is most common among older men and postmenopausal women, even younger individuals can run the risk of osteoporosis, especially those who have experienced a bone fracture in the past.

Studies published in a 2009 edition of the Osteoporosis Journal Club have found that a fragility fracture—including the fracture of the hip, vertebral, or wrist—is associated with an increased risk of subsequent fractures, often within a year following the initial fracture. In one study, individuals with wrist fractures were found to have a 3.3-fold risk of subsequent wrist fractures. So to prevent injury—and re-injury—it is best to be aware of how to avoid this disease.



The following are risk factors for osteoporosis:

- a personal history of fracture
- advancing age
- low body weight or low body mass index
- a family history of osteoporosis (particularly maternal history of hip fracture)
- estrogen deficiency
- current smoking
- excessive alcohol consumption
- long-term use of oral corticosteroids

If you think you may be at risk, speak with your doctor. He/she can measure your BMD (bone mineral density) and then work with you to develop a plan to treat or prevent osteoporosis.

While pharmacological treatment may be necessary, the following nonpharmacological treatments may also be used:

- ensuring adequate calcium and vitamin D intake
- achieving balanced nutrition with low salt and caffeine intake
- limiting alcohol intake to less than 3 drinks per day
- engaging in regular weight-bearing and muscle-strengthening exercise
- giving attention to personal factors that may affect balance, poor vision, or hearing
- making safety improvements at home to prevent falls

In short, timely and effective management is the best route in avoiding osteoporosis.

The information provided here is not to be used as a substitute for medical attention. Remember that, should you have specific medical questions or desire more information, contact your doctor.