

Osteoporosis affects men too

Osteoporosis is not just a "woman's disease". Although osteoporosis is less common in men than women, approximately 29% of New Zealand men (56% of women) over the age of 60 will suffer a fracture because of osteoporosis. This figure is expected to increase considerably with our ageing population.

The bones in the wrist, hip and spine are the most likely to break. Men are half as likely to suffer a vertebral fracture caused by osteoporosis than women. They also suffer far fewer hip fractures but are more seriously affected when they happen. Nearly twice as many men than women die or lose their mobility in the year following a hip fracture. All fractures are extremely painful and reduce quality of life.

There are several reasons why men have a lower risk of developing osteoporosis and have fewer fractures than women:

- Men have greater peak bone mass.
- There are significant differences between the male and female skeleton in terms of bone strength and geometry.
- Men don't experience the accelerated bone loss women do at menopause when their level of the female hormone oestrogen falls.
- Age is a risk factor for osteoporosis and men have a shorter life expectancy than women.
- Falls are probably less common among older men than women.

Published by Osteoporosis New Zealand Inc. with the support of



<http://www//osteoporosis.org.nz>

What is osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis (porous bones) is a debilitating bone disease that progressively weakens the skeleton supporting our body.

Bone is a living tissue. Throughout our life, new bone is constantly being made and old bone replaced. Osteoporosis develops when the amount of bone added is less than the amount of bone lost. Bones become extremely fragile and break easily. Even a tight hug or cough can break a bone in someone with osteoporosis.

It is important to develop strong bones in the first half of life to reduce the chance of getting osteoporosis later.

Note: Information included in this pamphlet is based on the best available evidence. It may change from time to time.

Donations

I would like to support Osteoporosis New Zealand in its education, information, support and advocacy work.

\$10 \$25 \$100 other _____

Cheque* Visa MC Amex _____
batch code

Card Number _____ Expiry _____

Signature _____

Name as it appears on card _____

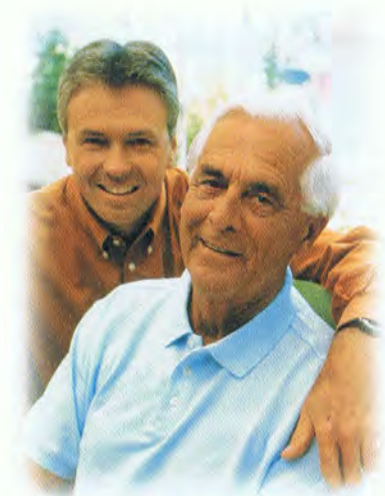
Please send me information about leaving a gift in my will (please tick)

I have left a gift to Osteoporosis New Zealand in my will (please tick)

*Payable to Osteoporosis New Zealand Incorporated,
PO Box 688, Wellington.

For pamphlet orders phone 04 499 4862
re-order number of this pamphlet 006

Osteoporosis in Men



Risk factors for osteoporosis in men

- Previous history of fracture
- Low testosterone level
- Too much alcohol
- Smoking
- Lack of physical activity
- Medications such as glucocorticoids, anticonvulsants
- Low peak bone density

Previous history of fracture

If an individual has had one bone fracture, the risk of a further fracture is increased by two- to five-fold. This is only partly because those with fractures have low bone density and may also reflect problems with the microscopic structure of bone tissue.

Low testosterone level

A reduction in the level of male sex hormones, like testosterone, increases the rate of bone loss in men. Although men's sex hormone production doesn't stop, as it does in women at menopause, it declines gradually with age and this increases the risk of older men developing osteoporosis. There is also a medical condition known as hypogonadism, which means a low level of male hormones. This puts men at risk at any age. A low testosterone level can be treated with testosterone supplementation.

Excessive alcohol consumption or smoking

Numerous studies have shown that bone density decreases in both men and women who drink too much alcohol or smoke.

Inactivity (bed-rest, paraplegia)

Prolonged immobility (due to bed-rest or paraplegia) and a lack of weight-bearing exercise leads to rapid bone loss.

Long-term glucocorticoid treatment

Glucocorticoids are a group of hormones produced by the adrenal glands, located above the kidneys. In the 1940s, synthetic glucocorticoids were introduced to help manage many painful diseases. The most common glucocorticoids are prednisone and cortisone. Prolonged treatment with these drugs can cause bone to thin, resulting in osteoporosis.

Diseases that are often treated with glucocorticoid medications include rheumatoid arthritis, asthma, psoriasis, Crohn's disease, severe allergic reactions and inflammations, and obstructive pulmonary disease. Ask your doctor about any potential side effects.

Low peak bone density

Men who do not achieve good peak bone mass in youth are prone to osteoporosis. This may be caused by genetic factors, but may also be due to delayed puberty, poor calcium intake, smoking and excessive alcohol consumption.

No known cause

Some men develop osteoporosis when no reason can be identified. This is called "idiopathic osteoporosis" and accounts for nearly 50% of all cases of osteoporosis in men.

The good news is that osteoporosis can be prevented and treated.

Managing osteoporosis

You can take these simple steps to improve your bone health:

- **Eat a balanced diet that is high in calcium.** You need a daily intake of 1000-1500mg of calcium to preserve bone mass and reduce the risk of fractures. That's equivalent to 4 to 6 servings of dairy products. Dairy products, such as milk and cheese are calcium-rich foods. One glass (200ml) of high-calcium milk provides over 400mg of calcium (*check the calcium content on the label*).
- **Spend 30 minutes outdoors each day.** This will ensure you get an adequate supply of vitamin D from sunlight on your skin. Your body needs vitamin D to absorb calcium.
- **Keep active with 30 minutes of physical activity each day.** Weight-bearing exercise that works your muscles against gravity helps keep your bones strong, e.g., walking, golfing, dancing and tennis.
- **Limit your intake of alcohol preferably to two, and no more than four standard drinks a day.**
- **Don't smoke.**
- **Medical treatment.** Biphosphonate drugs, taken in tablet form, increase bone density and can halve the risk of fractures. Ask your doctor about this treatment.