

Title: Osteoporosis: A patient's guide to diagnosis, prevention, and treatment.

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Abstract: A patient education tool describing osteoporosis, how diagnosis is made, and the prevention and treatment options. Bisphosphonate treatment is the usual pharmacological treatment. Bisphosphonates have been proven to be safe for long-term use up to 10 years; however, there is little data supporting the use beyond 5 years except in patients with a high risk for osteoporotic fracture.

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Osteoporosis:

For how long do I have to take bisphosphonates?

Usually at least 5 years. For people with a very high risk of breaking a bone, treatment may be continued beyond 5 years.

This Patient Education Tool was prepared by:

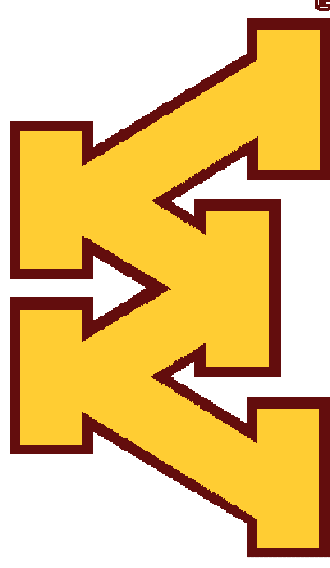
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A Patient's Guide to Prevention, Diagnosis, and Treatment

Where else can I find information about osteoporosis?

- As always, ask your doctor
- The Mayo Clinic online: www.mayoclinic.com
- National Osteoporosis Foundation: www.nof.org



What is osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis is a disease in which your bones become weak, making them more likely to break. The most common areas for these bones to break are the wrist, hip, and spine.

What are some of the risk factors for osteoporosis?

- Being female
- Age: risk increases with age
- Family history of osteoporosis
- Race: whites and Southeast Asians have the highest risk
- Being thin, or having a smaller body size

Who should be tested for osteoporosis?

- Women older than 65
- Postmenopausal women with risk factors or prior broken bone
- Use of steroids, such as prednisone
- Women who experience early menopause

How is osteoporosis diagnosed?

A quick, simple test called dual energy x-ray absorptiometry, or DEXA scan. It is a special x-ray that measures bone strength or density in the wrist, hip, and spine.

What are the prevention options?

- Calcium and vitamin D, ask your doctor for how much to take
- Exercise
- Stop smoking
- Hormone replacement

What are treatment options?

- Calcium and vitamin D supplements
- Hormone replacement
- Bisphosphonates

What are the side-effects of bisphosphonates?

- Nausea
- Abdominal pain
- Esophageal ulcers or inflammation