

Title:Osteoporosis after menopause - Treatment options

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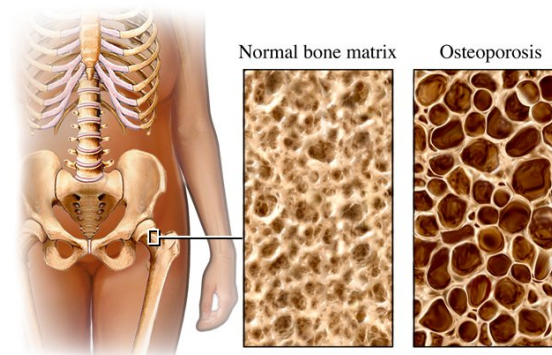
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Abstract:This handout provides information for patients on osteoporosis and its diagnosis and treatment, and how to obtain more information on the condition.

This document was created by a medical student enrolled in the Primary Care Clerkship at the University of Minnesota Medical School as part of the course project. The aim of the project is to present information on a medical topic in the format of a patient education handout. It does not necessarily reflect the views of the University of Minnesota Medical School physicians and faculty. These materials are provided for informational purposes only and are in no way intended to take the place of the advice and recommendations of your personal health care provider. The information provided may no longer be up to date since it has not been reviewed since the date of creation. The information provided should not be used to diagnose a health problem or disease, or as a means of determining treatment. In the event of a medical emergency, immediately contact a doctor or call 911.

Patient Education Tool:
OSTEOPOROSIS AFTER MENOPAUSE

OSTEOPOROSIS AFTER MENOPAUSE – TREATMENT OPTIONS



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www.soylabs.com/img/osteoporosis.jpg

WHAT IS OSTEOPOROSIS?

Osteoporosis or porous bone happens when bones lose minerals such as calcium. This makes the bone thinner and brittle and can cause it to fracture or break more easily. There are two ways doctors think about bone loss: one is osteopenia (= mild bone loss), and the other is osteoporosis (=severe bone loss).

You may not notice that you have osteoporosis, or you may have symptoms such as losing height or back pain. Osteoporosis can affect any bone in your body, but most often fractures happen in the spine, hips and wrists.

RISK FACTORS FOR OSTEOPOROSIS

- Female
- After menopause
- Low body weight
- Caucasian ethnicity
- Smoking or alcohol
- Lack of calcium and vitamin D
- Lack of exercise
- Medical problems (thyroid disease, eating disorders)

- Certain medications (corticosteroids)

TESTING

Most often, doctors find out if their patient has osteoporosis with a DEXA scan. DEXA stands for dual energy xray absorptiometry, and it measures how thick your bones are. It shows if your bone loss is severe.

TREATMENT

There are several medications that treat osteoporosis and/or may prevent it. Most of the drugs currently used are anti-resorptive, which means they block bone break down:

- Bisphosphonates: these are the treatment of choice
- Estrogen
- Drugs that work on hormone receptors (SERMs)
- Calcitonin

Some medications are anabolic, which means they build new bone:

- Teriparatide

Supplements like Calcium and Vitamin D generally have a weaker effect than medications do on osteoporosis.

TREATMENT SIDE EFFECTS

Some drugs can have harmful effects in addition to their positive effects on bone loss. Bisphosphonates mainly cause upset stomach, but can also rarely cause osteonecrosis of the jaw, which means they may harm the jaw bone and destroy it. Estrogens may increase the risk of blood clots and cancer. Estrogen receptor drugs may also increase the risk of blood clots. Calcitonin, Teriparatide, Calcium and Vitamin D have no serious side effects.

RESOURCES

Some studies suggest that you may not have to take medication forever to help with osteoporosis.

Talk to your doctor to find out which medication is best for your personal medical situation.

National Osteoporosis Foundation website

<http://www.nof.org/>