

## OSTEOPOROSIS.

Osteoporosis is a significant health problem that affects more than 25 million women in the United States and potentially 200 million worldwide. This disease is characterized by diminishing the structure of the skeleton (particular the "spongy" bone). This results in an increased risk of fracture. Osteoporosis develops silently over a period of years, eventually progressing to a point where a fracture can easily occur causing pain and disability. This disease is characterized by low bone mass and structural worsening of your bones, leading to bone fragility. There is an increased chances of damaging the hip, spine, and wrist . Twenty-five million Americans are affected by Osteoporosis, making it a major public health problem. 80% of those affected by osteoporosis are women. One out of every two women and one in five men have an Osteoporosis-related fracture. By age 75, one third of all men will be affected by osteoporosis. While osteoporosis is often thought of as an older person's disease, it can strike at any age. Osteoporosis is responsible for 1.5 million fractures annually, including:

- more than 300,000 hip fractures
- 500,000 vertebral fractures
- 200,000 wrist fractures

Certain some people are more likely to develop Osteoporosis than others. These factors can increase your chances of getting osteoporosis.

- A family history of fractures in elderly women
- Use of certain medications
- Chronically low calcium intake
- Thin and/or small bones
- An inactive lifestyle
- Cigarette smoking
- Excessive use of alcohol
- Advanced age

Women have approximately 10 to 25 percent less total bone mass at maturity than men, making them more open to osteoporosis.

Osteoporosis is often called the "silent disease" because bone loss occurs without symptoms. People may not know that they have osteoporosis until their bones become so weak that a sudden strain, bump, or fall causes a fracture or a vertebra to collapse. Once your vertebrae collapses you would feel it in the form of severe back pain, loss of height, stooped posture or dowager's hump.

Building strong bones, especially before the age of 35, can be the best defense against developing osteoporosis, and a healthy lifestyle can be critically important for keeping bones strong. So to help prevent osteoporosis:

- Eat a balanced diet rich in calcium
- Exercise regularly, especially weight-bearing activities
- Don't smoke
- Limit alcohol intake

Although there is no cure for Osteoporosis, there are treatments available to help stop further bone loss and fractures. Estrogen replacement therapy is the most popular treatment for osteoporosis. Studies have shown that estrogen can prevent the loss of bone mass in women. Another treatment used by both women and men for Osteoporosis is Calcitonin. This drug slows bone breakdown and also can reduce the pain. Medical experts agree that Osteoporosis is highly preventable. Specialized tests called bone density tests can measure bone density in various sites of the body. With the information obtained from these bone mass measurements, physicians can assess an individual's bone density and predict the likelihood of fractures. However commitment to Osteoporosis research must be significantly increased. It is reasonable to say that with increased research, the future for definitive treatment and prevention of osteoporosis is very bright. Several medications like vitamin D are currently under investigation and may someday be used as a better treatment or

even a cure for osteoporosis.

Osteoporosis is a disease that can be prevented and treated. This is a disease in which bones become fragile and more likely to break. If not prevented, osteoporosis can progress painlessly until a bone breaks. Millions of people all over the world are at risk. While women are five times more likely than men to develop the disease, men also suffer from osteoporosis. Building strong bones, especially before the age of 35, can be the best defense against developing osteoporosis, and a healthy lifestyle can be critically important for keeping bones strong. There are some things you can do to make sure you won't get osteoporosis like exercise and a good diet.