



Men & Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis, a disease that causes the skeleton to weaken and bones to break, is a significant threat to over 2.0 million men in the United States today. It affects nearly half of all people -- women and men - over the age of 75. Before age 90, 6% of all men will suffer a hip fracture as a result of osteoporosis. It is estimated that one-fifth to one-third of all hip fractures occur in men and that symptomatic vertebral fractures occur about half as often in men as in women.

Osteoporosis develops less often in men than women because men have larger skeletons, bone loss starts later and progresses more slowly, and there is no period of rapid hormonal change and accompanying rapid bone loss. However, in the last few years, it has been recognized that the problem of osteoporosis in men represents an important public health issue, particularly in light of estimates that the number of men above the age of 70 will double between 1993 and 2050.

While women lose bone mass rapidly in the years following menopause, by age 65 or 70, women and men lose bone mass at the same rate, and calcium absorption decreases in both sexes.

What are the risk factors for men?

- Prolonged exposure to certain medications, such as steroids used to treat asthma, arthritis, or other diseases, anticonvulsants, certain cancer treatments, and aluminum-containing antacids.
- Chronic diseases that affect the kidneys, lungs, stomach, and intestines or alter hormone levels.
- Undiagnosed low levels of the sex hormone testosterone.
- Unhealthy lifestyle habits (e.g., smoking, excessive alcohol use, low calcium intake, inadequate physical exercise).
- Age: The older you are, the greater your risk.
- Heredity.
- Race: Caucasian men appear to be at greatest risk, but all men can develop this disease.