

Physiotherapy Department

Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is a condition that affects the skeleton where bone stock is reduced. The resulting loss of bone density can leave a person more susceptible to bone fracture (broken bones).

We naturally lose bone density from the age of 30 but by maintaining regular load bearing exercise and a healthy diet, this helps to maintain our bone health and reduce or risk of developing osteoporosis.

The risk factors for developing osteoporosis include:

- Prolonged use of steroidal medications (more than 3 months).
- Family history of osteoporosis.
- Post menopause, early menopause, removal of ovaries under 45 years.
- Smoking or drinking heavily.
- Inactive lifestyle.
- Women with a body mass index below 19.
- Certain conditions such as inflammatory arthritis, Ulcerative Colitis, Coeliac Disease, Chronic Liver Disease, hormone related conditions such as overactive thyroid.

If you think that you are at risk, discuss this with your GP who may arrange for you to have a DEXA-scan to measure your bone density.

What can you do to reduce the risks or minimise the effects of osteoporosis?

Diet

Calcium is important for bone strength. Ensure that you eat a well-balanced diet rich in calcium, magnesium and vitamin K2. Foods such as low fat milk and dairy products, green vegetables such as broccoli, cabbage, pulses such as baked beans and bread (white, brown or wholemeal), citrus fruit.

Vitamin D is necessary for the body to absorb calcium but unlike calcium we cannot get the adequate amount from our diet (oily fish is one natural source). Our bodies produce vitamin D when our skin is exposed to sunlight so where possible, exposure of arms and upper chest for 20-30 minutes daily between April and October can help us to produce our own vitamin D. If this is not possible, or you have any of the above risk factors, speak to your GP about taking supplements.

Exercise

Load-bearing exercise helps to strengthen your bones and muscles.

A thirty minute walk 3-4 times a week is known to be beneficial, functional exercise such as climbing stairs, sit to stand repetitions, step ups or mini-squats (small knee bends) are examples of load bearing for the legs and spine.

It is also important to practice load bearing through your arms. This could include leaning on a table top, walking your hands forwards and backwards, or try doing gentle push ups against a wall.

Posture

Maintaining a good alignment of your body is important to reduce the risk of developing structural deformities and enables your muscles and joints to work properly. Let it become your habit to stand tall, sit tall and walk tall. When sitting, make sure that you have adequate support for your spine and thigh bones.

In bed, ensure that your pillow supports the small of your neck and that your mattress is not too hard or too soft. A well sprung mattress or memory foam should support the natural contours of your body.

Avoid trips, falls and injuries

- Remove unnecessary trip hazards in the home such as rugs and clutter.
- If your vision has deteriorated or have to look down to see through your spectacles, you may be at risk of falling. Consult an optician for advice.
- Avoid having to reach into awkward spaces where you have to bend and twist your spine.
- If you have concerns about your balance, ask your GP for advice and possible referral to physiotherapy or to a falls clinic.

Useful links:

The National Osteoporosis Society helpline Tel: 0845 450 0230 Website: www.nos.org.uk
Arthritis Research-UK Tel: 0300 790 0400 Website: www.arthritisresearchuk.org

Web Address

<http://www.cht.nhs.uk/services/clinical-services/physiotherapy-outpatients/patient-careinformation/>

QR Code



If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :

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If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce, obraťte se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem tych informacji w innym formacie lub wersji językowej, prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww. danych kontaktowych

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اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور فارمیٹ، طرزبان میں درکار ہوں، تو
برائے مہربانی مندرجہ بالا شعبے میں ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

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