

ADVICE SHEET FOR OSTEOPOROSIS

WHAT IS OSTEOPOROSIS

Osteoporosis is a condition portrayed as a decrease in bone density. Osteoporosis leads to bones becoming weak and brittle. Bones can be very fragile and a small fall or bending over can cause a fracture.

WHAT CAUSES OSTEOPOROSIS

The likelihood of developing osteoporosis partially depends on how much bone mass has been reached during your youth. The higher your peak bone mass is by your early 30s, the more bone there is stored up and the less likely you are to develop osteoporosis.

Factors that increase your risk for osteoporosis include:

- Sex: Women have a higher risk for developing osteoporosis.
- Age: The risk of osteoporosis increases with age.
- Hereditary: Family history of osteoporosis puts you at a greater risk for osteoporosis.
- Body Type: Regardless of sex, people who have smaller body frames are more likely to develop osteoporosis because they have less bone mass stored up as they age.
- Low intake of calcium: Lack of calcium contributes to a decline in bone density and early bone loss. The low intake of this nutrient also increases your risk for fractures.
- Eating disorders: Restricting food intake can lead to being underweight and can weaken bone.
- Corticosteroid medications: Oral or injected corticosteroid medications that are taken over a long period can interfere with the process of bone-rebuilding.
- Sedentary lifestyle: Not being active can lead to a higher risk of osteoporosis. Any activity that promotes good posture and balance is beneficial to your bones.

SYMPTOMS

In the early stages of bone loss, there are usually no symptoms. However, once your bones have been affected and weakened by osteoporosis, the symptoms include:

- Back pain
- Decrease in height
- Sloping shoulders
- A stooped posture

- A bone fracture that occurs from day-to-day activities

HOW TO LOOK AFTER IT AT HOME

Lifestyle choices that can help to prevent Osteoporosis from deteriorating include:

- No smoking: Smoking increases the rate of bone loss and this can increase the chance of experiencing a fracture.
- Avoid excessive alcohol: Bone formation can be decreased when consuming more than two alcoholic beverages a day.
- Maintain a healthy body weight: Being underweight makes it more likely to have bone loss and fractures. Similarly, being overweight can increase the risk of fractures.
- Be active: Weight bearing Physical activities can help to strengthen bone and maintain bone mass.
- Nutrient intake: It is essential to intake the proper amount of calcium and vitamin D to prevent bone loss and improve bone health.
- Avoid falls: Wear shoes without heels and nonslip soles in order to decrease your chance of falling. Install bars where needed in your home (such as by your shower door) so it makes it easier to get in and out of the areas.

PROFESSIONAL TREATMENT

Treatments are based on the possibility of breaking a bone and the bone density test is used to determine the risk. If the risk of breaking a bone is not high, then treatment may include modifying the risk factors for bone loss instead of using medication.

Multidisciplinary Team Roles:

- Dietician – To provide a diet plan specific for Osteoporosis
- Physiotherapy – To provide a graduated resistance/weights program to assist in the laying down of new bone.
- GP – Organise bone density scans and prescribe medication as appropriate.