



Osteoporosis Canada

Ostéoporose Canada

Osteoporosis

Are You At Risk?



What is Osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis is a disease characterized by low bone mass and deterioration of bone tissue, causing bones to become thin and weak. This leads to increased risk of fracture (broken bones), particularly of the hip, spine and wrist.

When bones are severely weakened by osteoporosis, even simple movements – such as bending over and picking up a heavy bag of groceries – can cause fractures.

Who is Affected?

- 1.4 million Canadians have osteoporosis, and another 2 million are at risk of developing the disease.
- 1 in 4 women over the age of 50 has osteoporosis.
- At least 1 in 8 men over 50 also has the disease.
- However, the disease can strike adults at any age.
- Given our aging population, the incidence of osteoporosis is expected to rise steeply over the next few decades.

Are You at Risk?

Osteoporosis Canada (OC) recommends that all postmenopausal women and men over 50 be assessed for risk factors for osteoporosis.

A bone mineral density (BMD) test is recommended for individuals over 50 with at least 1 major or 2 minor risk factors and for all individuals 65 or older.

Note that people with no apparent risk factors may still develop the disease.

Checklist for Risk of Osteoporosis*

Major Risk Factors

- Age 65 or older
- Vertebral compression fracture
- Fracture with minimal trauma after age 40
- Family history of osteoporotic fracture (especially if your mother had a hip fracture)
- Long-term (more than 3 months continuously) use of glucocorticoid therapy such as prednisone
- Medical conditions (such as celiac disease, Crohn's disease) that inhibit absorption of nutrients
- Primary hyperparathyroidism
- Tendency to fall
- Osteopenia apparent on x-ray
- Hypogonadism (low testosterone in men, loss of menstrual periods in younger women)
- Early menopause (before age 45)

Minor Risk Factors

- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Hyperthyroidism
- Prolonged use of anticonvulsants
- Prolonged heparin use
- Body weight less than 57 kg (125 lbs.)
- If your present weight is more than 10% below your weight at age 25
- Low calcium intake
- Excess caffeine (consistently more than 4 cups a day of coffee, cola or some energy drinks)
- Excess alcohol (consistently more than 2 drinks a day)
- Smoking

* The more risk factors you have, the greater your risk for fracture.