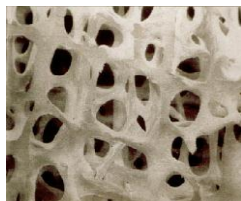


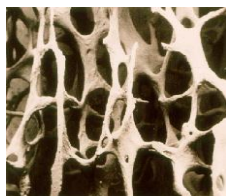


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Risk of osteoporosis and fractures



Healthy bone



Osteoporotic bone

Osteoporosis occurs when the struts that make up the mesh-like structure within bones become weak and thin causing them to become fragile and break easily following a minor bump or fall.

These broken bones are commonly referred to as 'fragility fractures'. The wrists, hips, and spine are the most commonly affected areas and it is these broken bones which can lead to the pain associated with osteoporosis. Spinal fractures can also cause loss of height and curvature of the spine.

We are all potentially at risk of osteoporosis because of normal bone loss associated with aging. There are many factors that can increase the risk of osteoporosis and broken bones. These include:

- **Genes:** Bone health is dependent on inherited genes from our parents.
- **Age:** As we get older, bones become more fragile and more likely to break.
- **Race:** People who are of Afro-Caribbean origin are at lower risk than those of Caucasian or Asian origin.
- **Gender:** Women are at greater risk than men because they have smaller bones and experience increased bone loss around the time of menopause.
- **Low body weight:** If you have a low BMI (body mass index) below 19kg/m² you are at greater risk of developing osteoporosis and fractures.
- **Smoking:** Current smokers are more likely to break bones.
- **Alcohol:** Excessive alcohol consumption appears to be a significant risk factor for osteoporosis and fractures. The current daily recommended limit, as suggested by the Food Standards Agency, is two to three units for women and three to four units for men. (A unit equals one small glass (125ml) of wine or half a pint (300ml) of beer or cider).



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- **Medical conditions such as:**

- Rheumatoid arthritis,
- Low levels of the sex hormone estrogen in women due to:
 - Anorexia nervosa
 - Early hysterectomy (before 45) with removal of ovaries
 - Excessive exercise.
- Low levels of the sex hormone testosterone in men can occur for a number of reasons, including following surgery for some cancers.
- Hyperthyroidism, when levels of thyroid hormone are abnormally high.
- Parathyroid disease, when levels of parathyroid hormone are abnormally high.
- Conditions that affect the absorption of food such as Crohn's or coeliac disease.
- Conditions that cause long periods of immobility such as stroke.

Other conditions may be associated with osteoporosis such as diabetes and HIV (AIDS).

For further information visit:

www.nos.org.uk

www.osteoporosis-resources.org.uk **Carla – link not working**

[How to take your bisph - v4 - 19 9 13 pub - FINAL.pub](#)