



DOCTOR DISCUSSION GUIDE

Managing Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is a bone disease where bones are more fragile and more susceptible to breaks. Asking the right questions during a conversation with your doctor will help you know what to expect and how to better navigate your condition. Familiarize yourself with these common terms before your appointment to help facilitate your discussion.

Vocabulary to Know

Your doctor might mention these common terms. Here's what they mean.

Fracture	The medical term for a broken bone. Fractures of the spine, hip, and wrist are the most common types of fractures with osteoporosis.
Bone Density	Also known as bone mineral density (BMD), this refers to the amount of bone mineral in bone tissue. People with low bone density have an increased risk for osteoporosis and fractures.
Bisphosphonates	A class of drugs for preventing bone density loss and used to treat osteoporosis and similar conditions. These medications work by interfering with the bone breakdown process. Sometimes, bisphosphonates can halt the bone breakdown process altogether. These medications are available as a daily pill or a yearly intravenous (IV) injection.
Bone Densitometry (DEXA)	A test using small amounts of ionizing radiation to take pictures of bones, usually the spine and hips, to determine bone loss. This simple and noninvasive test is mainly used for diagnosing osteoporosis and assessing fracture risk.
Bone Density Scanning	A test that determines if a person has osteoporosis. In addition to diagnosing osteoporosis, bone density scanning can calculate the risk for breakage. Using x-ray technology, it measures the amount of calcium and bone minerals in segments of bone. The bones most commonly examined are the spine and hips. Bone density scanning can also monitor the effectiveness of osteoporosis treatments.
Osteopenia	A condition where bone mineral density is lower than it should be. Some doctors consider it a sign someone will have osteoporosis later on. However, not every person with osteopenia goes on to develop osteoporosis. People with osteopenia are also susceptible to fractures.
Parathyroid Hormones	The main effects of elevated parathyroid hormones are depletion of calcium from bone tissue and elevated calcium levels. Parathyroid hormone therapy uses a synthetic form to stimulate bone growth. It is used to treat osteoporosis, especially in post-menopausal women and people who have high risk for fractures.
Post-Menopausal Osteoporosis	This type of arthritis affects women after menopause. The majority of osteoporosis cases in women are usually after menopause and often cannot be prevented. However, there are things women can do to reduce bone loss severity and their risk for fractures.



Questions to Ask

These questions will help you start a conversation with your doctor about how to best manage your osteoporosis.

About Symptoms

- What types of symptoms does osteoporosis cause?
- What bones does osteoporosis affect?
- Will I feel pain in early stages of osteoporosis?
- Will I lose height?
- Is my spine safe from fractures?
- How much bone loss is normal after menopause?

About Causes & Risk Factors

- How does being female increase my risk for osteoporosis?
- For men, what factors increase my risk?
- Will my family history play a part in my developing osteoporosis?
- I take glucocorticoids to reduce inflammation, will these increase my risk?
- Does my diet play any part in development of osteoporosis?
- Does having osteopenia increase my risk?

About Diagnosis

- How is osteoporosis diagnosed?
- What do the results of my bone density test mean?
- What is DEXA test and what does it look for?

About Treatment

- What types of medications are available for treating osteoporosis?
- What are the side effects?
- What exercises have the lowest risk for causing fractures?
- What types of diet will help reduce bone loss?
