

**ABOUT**

# Osteoporosis



**Osteoporosis** means “porous bone.” Osteoporosis happens when you lose too much bone, make too little bone, or both. The stronger your bones are, the better protected you will be against weak bones once bone loss begins. Osteoporosis is a condition in which the bones become weak and can break from a minor fall or, in serious cases, from a simple action such as a sneeze. Approximately 10 million Americans have osteoporosis and another 34 million are at high risk for developing the disease.

## Risk Factors for Osteoporosis

We all lose some bone density as we age, and anyone at any age can be afflicted with osteoporosis. Here is a partial list of factors that can help identify your risk for osteoporosis.

- Being female
- Menopause
- Older age
- Diet low in calcium and vitamin D
- Family history of osteoporosis
- Race/ethnicity (i.e. Caucasian, Asian, or Latino)

Additionally, there are many diseases that can harm your bones and increase your risk of osteoporosis. These include:

- AIDS / HIV
- Multiple sclerosis
- Breast cancer
- Parkinson’s disease
- Multiple myeloma
- Prostate cancer

Glucocorticoids are powerful steroid-like compounds that relieve inflammation from many conditions including arthritis, asthma, Crohn’s disease, allergies, and lupus. Glucocorticoids can also be used along with other medications to treat cancer and support organ transplants. Unfortunately, the predominant effect of glucocorticoids on the skeleton is reduced bone formation. People of all ages can lose bone and develop fractures if they take steroids for longer periods of time. If you take steroid medications for more than a few weeks, you should talk to your doctor about steps you can take to prevent bone loss.

