

Osteoporosis advice

For patients who have suffered a minor fragility fracture

Introduction

You have been given this leaflet because you have suffered a fragility fracture, which means that your bones are weak. As you will have already been told, you will need to visit your GP for any follow-up treatment. However, you can take simple measures to reduce the risk of further fractures. Some suggestions are in this leaflet.

What is a fragility fracture?

Fragility fractures are bone fractures that result from mechanical forces that would not ordinarily result in fracture, known as low-level (or 'low energy') trauma. These occur in weakened bones and can include things like coughing or sneezing, reaching or lifting or bending to pick something up or making your bed.

Causes of weak bones?

There can be many causes of weak bones. One of these is a condition called osteoporosis.

What is osteoporosis?

This is a condition when bone strength weakens and is prone to fracture. It usually affects the hips, wrists or spine. Increasing bone density will help to prevent osteoporosis.

Who might develop osteoporosis?

Women after the menopause have the highest risk of developing osteoporosis. However, some men, especially those who are 55 years or older can also develop the disease.

Younger people might also experience fragility fractures, in which case other causes for the bone weakness will need to be investigated.

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**Patient
Information**

What are the symptoms?

Osteoporosis is asymptomatic, which means that it does not produce any symptoms. As a result, a bone fracture can be the first sign of osteoporosis, perhaps after you have had a simple fall. So, please take care and use the following advice!

How to help prevent osteoporosis?

- Eat foods that contain calcium, for example; dairy products, spinach, broccoli (see next section for more dietary advice)
- Take regular physical exercise; this helps to improve bone density
- Make sure you get your daily dose of Vitamin D – spending time in sun light is a good source. Your doctor can advise if you need to take Vitamin D and calcium supplements and also, if necessary, other medications to increase your bone density
- Take precautions to help prevent further falls (see the ‘How to reduce risk the risk of further falls’ section)

Diet

Include calcium-rich foods such as milk, yogurt, cheeses, soy, tofu, fish (salmon and tuna) and dark green vegetables in your diet.

Important: Some food and drinks worsen calcium absorption such as coffee and other drinks with caffeine (black tea, energy drinks, and cola drinks), salt, processed sauces and meat. You should avoid consuming these with foods that are rich in calcium, such as milk and dairy products, because when consumed together the calcium is not absorbed properly.

How to reduce the risk of further falls?

Prevention of falls is important to avoid further fractures. Listed below are a few steps that you can take to reduce the risk:

- Remove rugs and other objects on the floor (such as trailing cables)
- Beware of slippery floors - wear shoes with non-slip soles
- Keep a check of where your pets are so that you can avoid tripping over them

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- Keep furniture to a minimum so that you have plenty of space to move around safely
- Fit handrails and grab bars near to the bed, stairs, toilet and inside the shower
- When you wake up at night, wait a few minutes and sit on the bed before standing, especially if you are taking medications that cause dizziness
- Make sure that your lighting is good; some low energy bulbs can create darkened areas

Please remember to book your GP appointment to start your treatment.

Further information

For more information about osteoporosis please visit the following websites:

International Osteoporosis Foundation

www.osteoporosis.foundation

Royal Osteoporosis Society

<https://theros.org.uk/>

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