

MAY Health Topic

Osteoporosis



INSTITUTE FOR
WOMEN'S HEALTH
RESEARCH™
AT NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

Osteoporosis, meaning “porous bones,” is a disease that causes the bones to become gradually weaker and brittle with age.

Although osteoporosis affects both men and women, women are about twice as likely to be diagnosed and to suffer fractures. The most common result of osteoporosis is bone fracture, typically from low impact activities such as bending over or lifting a box. Symptoms may be non-existent, or may include back pain if fractures are present. The risk of osteoporosis increases with age, and women may be more susceptible because they have less bone mass than men. The drop in estrogen levels at menopause can also accelerate the rate of bone loss. Although hormone therapy and other prescription medications can help preserve bone mass, the best treatment for osteoporosis is prevention and early detection. A high level of calcium and vitamin D in the diet, and periodic bone density scans are highly recommended.

Resources at Northwestern for Osteoporosis

The Prentice Women's Hospital at Northwestern Memorial Hospital offers comprehensive clinical services and community education in bone health. Through the Fracture, Osteoporosis and Metabolic Bone Disease Program, patients receive both inpatient consultation and treatment and outpatient follow-up and care. A dedicated intravenous infusion area is available for patients who require such medication. One of the first hospitals to provide osteoporosis evaluation to all patients

with hip and minimal trauma fractures, the hospital offers a unique environment that addresses the needs of women with osteoporosis.

Northwestern Physicians/ Researchers specializing in Osteoporosis

The Northwestern University Bone Health and Osteoporosis Program is comprised of researchers in multiple disciplines related to bone health. Founded by Drs. Craig Langman and Paula Stern, the group meets bimonthly for discussions and presentations related to diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of bone disease. With faculty members and associates from various departments, the group discusses opportunities for collaboration and facilitates creation of new projects related to bone disease.

IWHR Highlighted Researcher

Dr. Beatrice Edwards, MD is an Associate Professor in the Division of Geriatrics at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine. Director of the Bone Health and Osteoporosis Center, she is a member of Northwestern's Bone and Osteoporosis Program (NUBOP) as an active researcher of osteoporosis in women. Dr. Edwards led Northwestern's University fracture intervention program that increased treatment for osteoporosis after hip fracture. This project highlights the importance of secondary prevention in osteoporosis. She is currently evaluating the effect of an electronic medical record intervention for Quality Improvement in raising awareness of osteoporotic fractures in hospitalized female

patients. Dr. Edwards is a consultant to a national team of orthopedic experts in the American Orthopedic Association's “Own the Bone” which is chaired by Dr. Andrew Bunta (Orthopaedic Surgery). Recent studies identify that wrist fractures in women over the age of 65 years, (Study of Osteoporotic Fractures) increase the risk of functional decline by 50%. Another study involving the high-risk population of Chinese women in Chicago's Chinatown highlights the need for public outreach and prevention in this community. Dr. Edwards has also studied the epidemiology and pharmacovigilance on bisphosphonate associated osteonecrosis of the jaw, and co-authored the American Dental Association's Dental guidelines for patients on bisphosphonate therapy. An additional area of research interest is in breast cancer survivors with prevention of skeletal complications post cancer treatment..

Useful Links and Resources:

- <http://www.nof.org/>
- <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/osteoporosis.html>

Upcoming Conferences/ Symposiums

- 2009 Clinical Research Education Conference at Northwestern, May 15, 2009:
- <http://www.nucats.northwestern.edu/education/CRPT/CREC/>

Federal, state, and local organizations identify a number of health issues each month to bring to national attention. The Institute will focus on one of these topics each month.

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