



Menopause – changes that go right to the bone

Menopause is the stage in a woman's life when menstruation ceases, usually at around age 51. Prior to this, most women have irregular periods for a time – this is called perimenopause.

During menopause and perimenopause, women experience significant hormonal changes – and this can have a powerful impact on bone health.

How does menopause affect my bones?

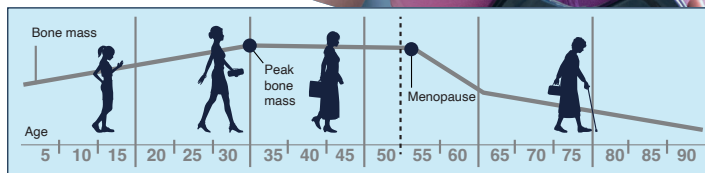
Oestrogen levels drop markedly after menopause, and there's a direct relationship between lack of oestrogen and bone loss – which can lead to the development of osteoporosis. Women typically lose 15-25% of their bone in the 10 years following menopause (about half of the total bone lost during their lifetime). Early menopause (before age 45 years) can lead to a greater amount of bone loss and a higher chance of osteoporosis at an earlier age.

What can I do?

There are a number of measures you can adopt to reduce your risk of developing osteoporosis.

These include:

- Maintaining a healthy body weight (BMI of 20-25).
- Doing regular weight bearing exercise.
- Avoiding smoking.
- Having no more than 3 alcoholic drinks per day.
- Eating a balanced nutritious diet with adequate dietary intake of protein and calcium (500mg/day)
- Getting 15-20 minutes of sun exposure each day to keep vitamin D levels up.
- Knowing your risk by completing the online risk assessment tool Know Your Bones™ to determine if you're at risk of osteoporosis – then take the summary report to your doctor, who can assess the findings.



Risk factors other than menopause include a family history of osteoporosis or broken bones, previous fragility fractures, low body weight some medical conditions, and taking certain medications.

If you're diagnosed with osteoporosis, your GP may recommend treatment. In younger women (less than 60 years) treatment options include (HRT is also known as menopausal hormone therapy or MHT), bisphosphonate therapy (e.g. alendronate or zoledronate) or in a few cases selective oestrogen receptor modulator (SERM). In women over 60 years, treatment usually takes the form of bisphosphonate therapy.

Know Your Bones.™ Visit osteoporosis.org.nz/take-the-test

Complete the online bone health assessment and you'll receive a personalised report explaining your risk of fracture and recommendations for better bone health.

If you would like to assist us in helping others like yourself, please consider donating to Osteoporosis NZ.

Visit our website www.osteoporosis.org.nz and click donate