Osteoporosis By the Numbers

1.5 million | 500,000 | 180,000 | $18 billion
fractures from osteoporosis | hospitalizations | people placed in nursing homes | spent on broken bones

...every year in the U.S.

For more information, visit these websites:

http://healthvermont.gov/research/chronic/osteoporosis.aspx
www.uvmhealth.org/Pages/home.aspx
http://nof.org/

Keep Your Bones Healthy!

Osteoporosis Prevention, Screening, and Treatment
Prevention

Osteoporosis occurs when we break down bone faster than we build it. It leads to weak, brittle bones that are at risk for fracture. Fortunately, osteoporosis is a preventable disease, not an inevitable part of aging.

With a healthy diet, exercise, and the reduction of certain risk factors, you can build and maintain healthy, strong bones to last a lifetime.

Healthy Diet

A diet rich in calcium and vitamin D is the way to go!

Calcium rich foods include:

- Dairy products like low-fat milk, cheese, and yogurt.
- Some green vegetables like broccoli, kale, and soy beans.
- Calcium fortified cereals, breads, and no-sugar-added juices.

Fatty fish like salmon and tuna are excellent sources of vitamin D. But, getting enough from diet and sun exposure alone can be difficult, especially in Vermont, which is why supplementation with vitamin D3 is recommended:

- most adults need 600 IU daily.
- adults age 70 and older need 800 IU daily.

Exercise

Weight-bearing exercise like walking, jogging, or even climbing the stairs is essential for bone health.

- Adults need 30 minutes daily (children 60 min), so go for a walk at lunch, play a game of basketball, or hit the treadmill at the gym when it’s dark and cold outside. Your bones will thank you!

Modifiable Risk Factors

Certain behaviors weaken your bones, placing you at risk for osteoporosis. The following are three changes you can make to protect yourself from painful fragility fractures:

- Stop smoking—cigarette smoking increases the risk of fracture over a lifetime.
- Reduce the amount you drink—alcohol consumption in excess of 2 drinks per day can result in low bone density.
- Make your home a fall-free zone—avoiding falls reduces the risk of osteoporosis-related fracture, so make sure you have nightlights, hand rails, and smooth walking surfaces at home.

Screening

Screening for osteoporosis is performed using a type of low-dose x-ray that measures bone mineral density, called a DXA scan. The process is painless, covered by Medicare Part B, and takes 10 to 30 minutes to complete. The following should be screened using DXA or an equivalent method:

- Women age 65 and older.
- Women under age 65 with a fracture risk equal to or greater than a white 65-year-old woman. Your doctor can help calculate this risk.
- Men with certain metabolic diseases or inflammatory conditions may be at risk and should speak with their doctor.

Treatment

The decision to treat low bone mass is often based on your 10 year risk of osteoporosis-related fracture. This risk is calculated using factors such as age, weight, race, lifestyle, and measured bone mineral density. While anyone can develop osteoporosis, white postmenopausal women are at the highest risk. If you and your doctor decide it is time to treat your osteoporosis to reduce your risk of fracture, there are several medication options out there.

The most commonly prescribed medications are called bisphosphonates, and they protect your bones from excessive breakdown. Some bisphosphonates can be taken weekly, some are administered only twice per year. Depending on your unique circumstances, other options are available to keep your skeleton strong.

It is important to continue eating well, exercising, and making healthy choices after a diagnosis of osteoporosis; this will help maintain the bone you have and protect you from fractures!