

# WOMEN'S HEALTH TRENDS

## Bone Up On Osteoporosis

(NAPSA)—Did you know that nearly 40 percent of women in their 60s have osteoporosis and more than 75 percent of women over 80 have it? If you didn't know that, you're not alone. According to the National Osteoporosis Foundation, osteoporosis and low bone mass affects an estimated 28 million Americans.

However, most women don't even know they have the disease, let alone seek treatment. Many women believe that if they simply watch their diet and exercise regularly, they won't be affected. However, diet and exercise may not be enough to prevent osteoporosis from striking.

**Osteoporosis is a silent disease that gradually weakens bones, making them increasingly fragile and more likely to break.** Osteoporosis is a silent disease that gradually weakens bones, making them increasingly fragile and more likely to break from minor injury. In fact, in its early stages, osteoporosis can strike without any warning signs. Many

women don't realize that height loss, development of stooped posture or some broken bones are consequences of the disease.

The most accurate method of determining a woman's risk for osteoporosis is a bone mineral density test, which is quick, easy and painless. Medicare now reimburses bone mineral density testing for eligible beneficiaries 65 and older, making the tests more accessible than ever before. Yet, despite the availability of the test and Medicare coverage, only a relatively small number of women with osteoporosis have been diagnosed and treated.

### Who is at risk?

Women who have gone through menopause (whether as part of the natural process of aging or due to early removal of ovaries) may be at risk. Other factors that contribute to risk include:

### Heredity

- A family history of osteoporosis



- A thin or petite build
- Caucasian or Asian descent (although these groups are at greater risk, osteoporosis can affect women of all ethnic backgrounds)

### Decreased estrogen levels

- During or after menopause

### Medications

- Steroids (e.g., for asthma or arthritis)
- Excess thyroid hormone

### Lifestyle

- Smoking
- Too much caffeine
- Too much alcohol
- Lack of physical activity
- Inadequate calcium and vitamin D intake (e.g., little or no milk or dairy products in diet)

You also may have none of these risk factors and still have or develop osteoporosis. So talk to your doctor about whether or not you are at risk for osteoporosis, and whether a bone mineral density test is right for you.

To learn more about osteoporosis, call 1-800-950-6724 or visit the Web site, [www.bonedensitytest.com](http://www.bonedensitytest.com).