



# Prevent & Reduce Your Risk of Osteoporosis

Bone health is essential to keep strong and active. The condition of having weak bones is termed osteoporosis.

However it is often neglected because we may not experience any pains or symptoms until it is too late.

Fortunately it can be picked up with a simple test and it can be prevented with proper medication.

If osteoporosis is not detected and left untreated, then this can lead to fractures of the bones. The most common fractures involve the spine, hip and wrist. The most important point is that osteoporosis can be prevented.

People at risk of having osteoporosis or weak bones are those over the age of 50 years or those patients with mild aches in their joints. Thus they should all be tested by a simple type of x-ray called a bone mineral density scan. This will give an accurate assessment of the strength or density of their bones. If it is low, then they will be prescribed medications. There is a variety of medications available depending on the severity of their disease. Multiple studies have shown that with proper medication, fractures can be prevented.

Simple lifestyle changes can improve bone health. Patients should stop or decrease their smoking which has shown to increase the risk of developing osteoporosis.

Exercise is helpful to strengthen bones. Activities such as walking, cycling or using

light weights at the gym applies forces on the bone and makes them adapt by becoming stronger. These activities should be done at least three times per week.

Adequate calcium intake is important to keep the bones strong. Foods such as green vegetables, milk, cheese and yoghurt are high in calcium. If some people are intolerant to taking milk and cheese, then soybean can be substituted. Otherwise taking calcium and vitamin D supplements are useful. These supplements should not be taken with meals as the acid can decrease the absorption of the vitamins from the stomach. Calcium should be taken with caution in patients with kidney or heart disease so it is best to see a doctor for advice.

Thus, if you are a person above the age of 50 years or if you have general joint aches, then it would be advisable to see a doctor to assess you for possible osteoporosis. The test is quick and simple. The treatment is medication. This will prevent bone fractures and keep you healthy and active.



This article is written by Dr Andrew Quoc Dutton. Dr Dutton is a USA fellowship-trained consultant orthopaedic surgeon. He has subspecialty interests in arthroscopic/keyhole and sports surgery, knee and hip replacements, cartilage regeneration and stem cell therapeutics in orthopaedics.

Dr Dutton has been in clinical practice for the past 17 years after graduating from the University of New South Wales, Sydney. He then worked at the Prince of Wales Hospital and St. George Hospital in Sydney. He completed his subspecialty training

and was on staff at the Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School, USA.

Dr Dutton has worked with the Singapore Sports Council and has treated some of Singapore's national elite athletes of various sports such as football, badminton, basketball and netball. He was an official physician during the 2010 Summer Youth Olympic Games hosted in Singapore.

In 2003, Dr Dutton won the Singapore Young Investigator Award for his work on stem cell therapy for the knee. Dr Dutton has obtained

several government research grants for cartilage repair and bone graft applications. Dr Dutton is one of the few orthopaedic surgeons in South-East Asia able to perform stem cell therapeutics in orthopaedics.

Dr Dutton regularly gives lectures around the region and has trained many orthopaedic surgeons from the various South-East Asian countries.

