Care Gram
Osteoporosis

What Is Osteoporosis?
Osteoporosis is a bone disease that causes your bones to become thin and brittle. Bones can break with normal activity (such as lifting a heavy object or stepping off a curb). The exact cause is unknown. Some causes could be:
- The natural aging process
- Lack of estrogen in women and testosterone in men
- Not enough calcium or phosphorus – these minerals help build strong bones
- Not enough vitamin D
- Inactive lifestyle

Risk Factors
- Older men and women – women are at higher risk because of menopause and smaller, lighter bones
- Cigarette smoking
- Caucasian race
- Early menopause or removal of ovaries
- Low body weight
- Poor nutrition or a diet low in calcium
- Personal or family history of a fracture
- Certain medications – aluminum, too much thyroid hormone, blood thinners, lithium, cancer medication, steroids, or seizure medication
- Lack of exercise
- Alcoholism
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Dementia

Symptoms
- Back pain or tenderness
- Decrease in height
- Curved spine
- Broken bones (such as the hip, small bones in the spine [vertebrae], and the wrist)
- Often, there are no symptoms associated with osteoporosis

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Prevention

Focus on building and keeping as much bone as possible

- Engage in weight-bearing exercise, such as walking
- Make sure you have enough calcium and vitamin D in your diet
- Avoid falls

Tests to Diagnose

Early detection is important. If you are at risk for osteoporosis, get checked before you have symptoms. A DEXA scan is the primary screening for diagnosis. It is a simple X-ray that uses less radiation than a chest X-ray to scan the hips and lower spine. Testing should begin at age 65 or earlier if there is a history of a fracture or other risk factors.

Treatment

- Medication to reduce bone loss and increase bone thickness, such as bisphosphonates, raloxifene, and estrogen
- Calcium supplement with vitamin D and sunlight
- Antibody therapy
- Anabolic agents