Treatment for Osteoporosis

A strong adult skeleton starts in childhood with a healthy diet, exercise, and adequate calcium and vitamin D. Even when we don't achieve our full skeletal potential, we can keep our bones healthy and strong. There is no single "silver bullet" remedy. It takes a whole-person approach. Get enough dietary calcium, take vitamin D, participate in regular exercise, fall-proof at home, and avoid smoking and excess alcohol. And, if you have had fractures or are diagnosed with osteoporosis, talk with your healthcare provider about medication options. You and your provider can work out a plan that keeps you on your feet and active throughout your long and healthy life.

Choosing the Right Osteoporosis Medication

There are many things to think about when choosing the right osteoporosis medicine. You and your healthcare provider may want to look at:

Your sex. Some osteoporosis medications are approved for both men and women, while some are approved for women only. Visit our Medications and Treatment Adherence page for further details about which medications are appropriate for women and for men.

Your age. Some medicines are more appropriate for younger postmenopausal women while others are more appropriate for older women.
Osteoporosis medication is not recommended for healthy premenopausal women. However, young women who take medications or have disorders known to cause bone loss and fractures may benefit from osteoporosis treatment. This could be the case in a premenopausal woman experiencing low-trauma fractures while on long-term high-dose corticosteroids to manage an autoimmune disease such as lupus.

How much bone you've lost. Osteoporosis medicines work in different ways. A person with more severe bone loss or multiple broken bones may be recommended a different medicine than a person with less bone loss or no fractures.

Your overall health. Your healthcare provider will consider other health problems you have when recommending a medicine. If you have had breast cancer or blood clots, for example, you should not take estrogen. Also, if your bones have been exposed to radiation treatment, you should not take teriparatide (Forteo®) or abaloparatide (Tymlos).

Your personal preferences. Do you prefer a pill, liquid, or medicine that is given as an injection? Does it work better for you to take your medicine every day, once a week, once a month, twice a year, or once a year? Do you have negative feelings about a particular drug?
These factors can influence your treatment decision. No two people are the same. How well a medicine works, or what side effects it will have, can vary from one person to the next.

Paying for Medications and Understanding Your Health Insurance

Paying for Your Medication

Osteoporosis medications require a prescription from your healthcare provider. How much your insurance company pays for an osteoporosis medication depends on the type of insurance plan you have. You may have a co-pay and this.