

OSTEOPOROSIS

What is Osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis is a disease due to reduction in bone strength and bone mass, resulting in fragile bone and propensity of fracture. Bone mass decreases gradually after the age of 40 and in women, the quickest period for bone loss is between age of 50-54, i.e. around the menopause. Research findings showed that low body weight and a family history of osteoporosis are two most important predictors for low bone mass. Other risk factors for osteoporosis include late menarche, lack of exercise, no menses/premature menopause, usage of drugs, other medical illnesses and adverse lifestyle habits.

Prevention and Treatment of Osteoporosis

To prevent osteoporosis, we should get adequate calcium from our diet and exercise regularly. Avoid smoking, alcohol, coffee, tea or excessive salt or protein intake. Make sure our environment is safe, avoiding the chance of falling.

If you suspect you are suffering from osteoporosis, you should ask your doctor to do a bone mineral density measurement. Do not try to treat yourself without a doctor's advice. Try to plan your regular exercise programme. Ensure adequate daily calcium intake. Stop smoking and cut down alcohol intake. For drug therapy, patient should consult their doctor before taking calcium supplements, oestrogen replacement, vitamin D, calcitonin, bisphosphonates, selective oestrogen receptor modulators (SERMs).

Osteoporosis Centre, Queen Mary Hospital, The University of Hong Kong

The University of Hong Kong has established the Osteoporosis Centre in April 2000 at Queen Mary Hospital. It aims to provide comprehensive care and support to patients with osteoporosis. Its scope of service includes developing diagnostic and therapeutic strategies for osteoporosis and promoting public awareness of osteoporosis by organizing various education programme. The centre also provides training to health professionals on the disease.

The Centre also established the first bilingual website to disseminate information on prevention and treatment of osteoporosis. Web site:
<http://www.hku.hk/medicine/osteocentre>.