Osteopenia Treatment

What is Osteopenia?

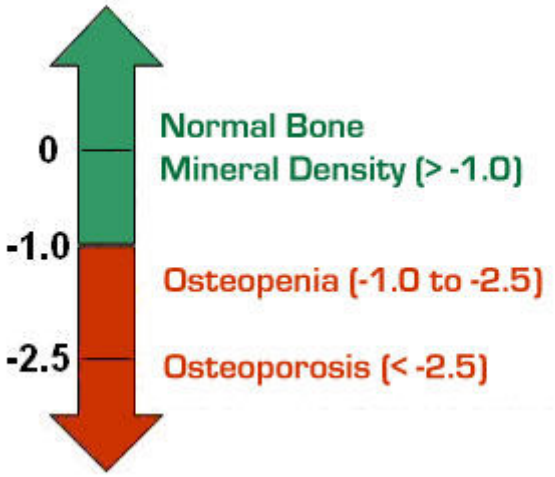
Osteopenia is a condition that means your bones are weak and you are getting close to osteoporosis. Once you have osteoporosis you are more likely to break a bone. Since there are no symptoms, you might not know your bones are getting weaker until you break a bone!

A broken bone can really affect your life. It can cause disability, pain, or loss of independence. It can make it harder to do daily activities without help, such as walking. This can make it hard to participate in social activities. It can also cause severe back pain and deformity.

What is the Difference Between Osteopenia and Osteoporosis? Painless bone mineral density tests, called DEXA tests, can help determine your bone mass and determine if you have normal bone mineral density, or osteopenia or osteoporosis. These tests provide a T-score which compares your bone mineral density (BMD) to an optimal BMD of a 30 year old healthy adult.

If you look at the illustration below, you will see that a T-score of -1.0 and above indicates normal bone density. A T-score of -1.0 to -2.5 indicates that you have low bone mass (osteopenia). A score below -2.5 indicates osteoporosis.

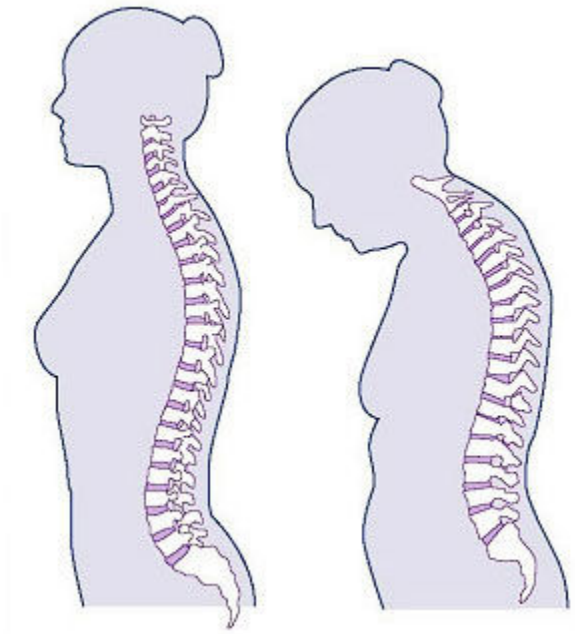
If you are age 65 and older, you should think about getting a bone density test. You have a higher chance for broken bones.



Before the 1990s, we used to think only women got osteopenia and osteoporosis. Now we know that men also have to worry about weak bones. In fact, one in four men over age 50 will suffer a fracture caused by osteoporosis.

Although bone density can be lost during breastfeeding, this loss is only temporary. Several studies have shown that when women have bone loss during lactation, they recover full bone density six months after weaning.

Osteoporosis can happen to any of your bones, but is most common in the hip, wrist, and in your spine, also called your vertebrae. Vertebrae are important because these bones support your body to stand and sit upright.



Osteoporosis in the vertebrae can cause serious problems for women. A fracture in this area occurs from day-to-day activities like climbing stairs, lifting objects, or bending forward

Sloping shoulders

Curve in the back

Height loss

Back pain

Hunched posture

Protruding abdomen

Risk Factors for Osteopenia and Osteoporosis

Things that can increase your chances of developing osteoporosis include:

- being female
- small, thin body
- family history of osteoporosis
- being postmenopausal or of an advanced age
- Caucasian or Asian race
- abnormal absence of menstrual periods or having an eating disorder, such as anorexia nervosa or bulimia that can cause menstrual periods to stop before menopause, and loss of bone tissue from too much exercise

- low testosterone levels in men
- a diet low in dairy products or other sources of calcium and vitamin D
- inactive lifestyle
- long-term use of glucocorticosteroids (medicines prescribed for many diseases, including arthritis, asthma, and lupus) anti-seizure medications; gonadotropin releasing hormone for treatment of endometriosis; aluminum-containing antacids; certain cancer treatments; and excessive thyroid hormone
- cigarette smoking and drinking too much alcohol

Treatment

Good news! - Osteopenia is preventable and treatable for almost everyone. No matter how old you are, it is never too late to start! Building strong bones during your youth is the best defense against getting osteopenia later. Building strong bones at a young age will lessen the effects of the natural bone loss that starts around age 30. If you are old or young, build your bone health using the following advice.

1. Get enough calcium each day

The best way to prevent osteopenia is to get enough calcium along with the other co-factors such as magnesium, trace minerals, vitamins D3 and K2 in your diet. Osteopenia and Osteoporosis are not problems of insufficient calcium intake but rather of incorrect calcium utilization because we do not get sufficient amounts of these co-factors in our diet.

You need enough calcium each day for strong bones throughout life. We recommend you can get it through foods, and then make up the shortfall using a calcium supplement with the above co-factors included in the formula.

Here is how much elemental calcium you need each day

Ages	Milligrams per Day
9-18	1300
19-50	1000
51 and older	1200

2. Get enough vitamin D

It is also important to get enough vitamin D, which helps your body take in calcium. You can get vitamin D through sunlight and foods like milk cod liver oil.

3. Get enough magnesium daily

Magnesium works closely with calcium to keep the calcium in your bones and out of your soft tissues. It has many other functions in your body including disease prevention. Eat a variety of whole grains, legumes, and vegetables (especially dark-green, leafy vegetables with chlorophyll) to increase dietary magnesium intake. A smart approach is to take magnesium along with your calcium as the two minerals work together in several ways to maintain balance. It is always best to get any mineral from a food.

4. Get your Vitamin K2

A dozen recent studies have shown vitamin K2 to be very beneficial to you bone health. Unlike some vitamins which can be synthesized in your body, you cannot make Vitamin K so it must be supplied by your food. Vitamin K cannot be stored in the body either, so it must come directly from your diet on a regular basis.

5. Get moving

Being active helps your bones in more than one way

- slows your bone loss
- improves your muscle strength
- helps your balance preventing bone-damaging falls

Do weight-bearing physical activity, which is any activity in which your body works against gravity. Here are some examples: walk, dance, run, climb stairs, garden, do yoga or tai chi, jog, hike, play tennis, or lift weights — it all helps!