

## **Osteoporosis: What You Need to Know**

### Overview & Prevalence

- Osteoporosis is characterized by low bone mass and deterioration of the bones, resulting in weak, fragile bones and/or fractures.<sup>i</sup>
- Osteoporosis is highly prevalent in post-menopausal women, but once a woman knows she has low bone mass or osteoporosis, she and her doctor can discuss steps she can take to prevent further bone loss, strengthen bones and reduce fracture risk.
- As many as 8 million women suffer from osteoporosis<sup>ii</sup> and another 22 million women have bone density deficiency<sup>iii</sup>.
- An estimated 50 percent of 50-year-old women will suffer a fracture in their remaining lifetime.<sup>iv</sup> The risk of fracture doubles every 7 years beyond age 50.
- Osteoporosis can cause painful and debilitating spinal fractures, which can gradually collapse the bones of the spine, causing height loss, difficulty breathing, pain and a stooped posture.<sup>v</sup>
- Signs of osteoporosis can include unexplained back pain, height loss, recurrent fractures or fracture resulting from minimal trauma.<sup>vi</sup>

### Risk & Preventing Disease Progression

- Menopause is one of the risk factors for osteoporosis. Low estrogen levels associated with menopause can lead to rapid bone loss.
- While calcium, Vitamin D, exercise and a healthy lifestyle with no smoking and limited alcohol use are important for bone health throughout life, they may not be enough to stop bone loss, restore bone or reduce fractures in many postmenopausal women.<sup>1</sup>

### Diagnosis & Testing

- Osteoporosis often goes unrecognized for many years until one or several fractures have occurred.
- Women should talk to their doctors about their risk for osteoporosis, signs of low estrogen and whether an estrogen level check and BMD test might be appropriate for them.

### Social and Economic Costs

- Osteoporosis costs the U.S. healthcare system nearly \$17 billion annually, and the cost is rising. By 2020, the cost is expected to increase to more than \$60 billion.<sup>vii</sup>

- Osteoporotic fractures may cause disfigurement, disability, loss of mobility, prevent a woman from participating in daily activities and make her more dependent on others.
- One in four individuals who experience an osteoporotic hip fracture will require long-term nursing home care.
- Half of women who have a hip fracture will be unable to walk without assistance or return to their previous level of mobility.
- In women 50 years or older who suffer a hip fracture, there is up to a 24 percent increased risk of dying of the fracture within one year.<sup>viii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> "Fast Facts on Osteoporosis," National Osteoporosis Foundation ([www.nof.org/osteoporosis/stats.htm](http://www.nof.org/osteoporosis/stats.htm))

<sup>ii</sup> "America's Bone Health: The State of Osteoporosis and Low Bone Mass," National Osteoporosis Foundation ([www.nof.org/advocacy/prevalence](http://www.nof.org/advocacy/prevalence))

<sup>iii</sup> Menostar sNDA press release, 10/16/2003

<sup>iv</sup> "Fast Facts on Osteoporosis," National Osteoporosis Foundation ([www.nof.org/osteoporosis/stats.htm](http://www.nof.org/osteoporosis/stats.htm))

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<sup>vii</sup> "America's Bone Health: The State of Osteoporosis and Low Bone Mass," National Osteoporosis Foundation ([www.nof.org/advocacy/prevalence.htm](http://www.nof.org/advocacy/prevalence.htm))

<sup>viii</sup> "Fast Facts on Osteoporosis," National Osteoporosis Foundation ([www.nof.org/osteoporosis/stats.htm](http://www.nof.org/osteoporosis/stats.htm))