

OSTEOPOROSIS

Osteoporosis occurs when there are decreased levels of Calcium in the body. This causes thinning of the bones, making them 'brittle' and much more prone to fracture. It is a major cause of pain, disability, reduction in quality of life and even death amongst the elderly population. This is due mainly to fractures (commonly of the hip, wrist, spine and pelvis) and their related complications.

The risk factors include increasing age, sex (occurs more often in females), early menopause, family history of osteoporosis, lack of physical activity and lack of calcium and Vitamin D in the diet.

Unfortunately, osteoporosis is often diagnosed after a fracture. Bone density scans can be used to determine whether osteoporosis is present and therefore whether treatment is required. So if you recognise a few of the risk factors mentioned above, it may be worthwhile discussing with your GP whether a bone density scan would be appropriate for you.

Prevention is the most important factor in the treatment of osteoporosis. This includes:

A) EXERCISE

Regular moderate intensity exercise, 3 to 4 times a week for at least 30 minutes. Best results are obtained with weight bearing and resistance exercise programs. Maroochydore and Buderim Sports and Spinal Physiotherapy practises are now running specific exercise classes for the prevention and treatment of osteoporosis.

B) AVOIDING FALLS

Make sure that your home is safe, that rugs or cords cant be tripped on and the lighting is adequate. Our exercise programs increase balance as well as muscle strength and endurance, to help prevent falls.

C) DIET

A diet rich in Calcium and Vitamin D is essential for healthy bone growth.

D) DRUG THERAPIES

See your doctor or pharmacist to discuss the best option for you.

For more information on osteoporosis or our new exercise classes, contact Sean Campbell at Maroochydore and Buderim Sports and Spinal Physiotherapy centres on 5476 9068.