

Osteoporosis Risk Factors

Certain people are more likely to develop osteoporosis than others. Factors that increase the likelihood of developing osteoporosis are called "risk factors." The following risk factors have been identified:

- Personal history of fracture after age 50
- Current low bone mass
- History of fracture in a first relative
- Being female
- Being thin and/or having a small frame
- Advanced age
- A family history of osteoporosis
- Estrogen deficiency as a result of menopause, especially early or surgically induced
- Abnormal absence of menstrual periods (amenorrhea)
- Anorexia nervosa
- Low lifetime calcium intake
- Use of certain medications, such as corticosteroids and anticonvulsants
- Low testosterone levels in men
- An inactive lifestyle
- Current cigarette smoking
- Excessive use of alcohol
- Being Caucasian or Asian, although African Americans and Hispanic Americans are at significant risk as well

Women can lose up to 20 percent of their bone mass in the five to seven years following menopause, making them more susceptible to osteoporosis.