

Osteoporotic Fracture

What is an osteoporotic fracture?

An osteoporotic fracture (also called fragility fracture) is a fracture that occurs with minimal forces that ordinarily would not cause a fracture. Example – falling from standing height or less.

If you are 50 or older and had a fracture (especially if without any trauma) there is a good chance that it is related to osteoporosis.

What are common sites for osteoporotic fractures?

- The hips, spine and forearm (wrists) are most common sites
- The upper arm (humerus), ribs, lower legs (tibia), pelvis are other areas where one can have osteoporotic fractures

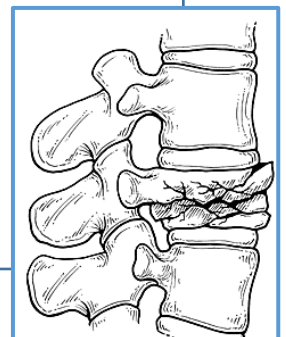
What are symptoms of compression (spine) fractures?

A compression fracture in the spine may not cause any back pain or other symptoms.

When symptoms are present, they often include

- Sudden onset of back pain
- Decrease in height
- Pain worse with standing or walking
- Pain less with lying on the side
- Decrease movements of spine (ability to bend or stretch backwards)
- Deformity – bulging along back, stooped shape

The pain usually gets better after about 4-6 weeks but could take longer



What are symptoms of hip (osteoporotic) fractures?

- Pain along the hip or groin
- Difficulty walking or standing

What are symptoms of wrist (osteoporotic) fractures?

Usually happens when one lands on an outstretched hand during a fall

- Pain and swelling of wrist or forearm
- Decrease in movement of wrists
- Difficulty gripping items

What to do if you had an osteoporotic fracture?

- Seek medical care – your primary care physician, orthopedic surgeon or rheumatologist should be able to help
- A person with an osteoporotic fracture is at higher risk for another fracture. It is therefore important to take steps to prevent further fractures
- Your healthcare provider may refer you to a fracture liaison service (FLS)

What your doctor will do for you

- Your doctor will ask questions to identify the risk factors for weak bones and for the fracture
- An examination may include checking your height (to see if you have lost height) and checking your spine
- Lab tests may include checking your calcium, vitamin D, hormone levels
- A DEXA bone may be needed if you have not had one within 2 years
- You will need to be started on medications to help strengthen your bones and decrease risk for fractures in the future
- Your doctor may recommend physical and occupation therapy to improve your strength and decrease risk for falls