



Sponsored by



The France Foundation

Strategies to Improve the Care of MS in Women



Bone Mineral Density Testing/Osteoporosis Risk Screening

OVERVIEW

Osteoporosis is a condition where bones are weak. There may be no symptoms until a bone is broken but there are several things you can do to lessen the risk of a fracture. First, what are the risk factors for osteoporosis and why are patients with MS at special risk? Recognized risk factors for osteoporosis include vitamin D and calcium insufficiency, being female, immobility, corticosteroid use, smoking, and excessive alcohol intake. Some medications may increase the risk of osteoporosis. Fractures from falls are common, and can be due to unsafe conditions in the home, problems with balance or gait, or visual impairment. If you have some of these risk factors and the following conditions describe you, your doctor may suggest a bone density test. The National Osteoporosis Foundation (NOF) recommends that the following individuals be tested:

- Women age 65 and older
- Men age 70 and older
- Postmenopausal women and men ages 50–69 with clinical risk factors
- Adults who have a fracture after age 50
- Adults with a condition (e.g., rheumatoid arthritis) or taking a medication (e.g., glucocorticoids) associated with low bone mass or bone loss

The bone density test can help your doctor estimate your fracture risk and guide management.

RELEVANCE FOR MS

Several aspects of multiple sclerosis can impact bone health. Patients receiving steroids and those unable to exercise may suffer compromised bone strength. Also, conditions such as impaired vision or balance can increase the risk of falling, the cause of most fractures. Review the following question. If you check any of the descriptions you might review them with your physician at the next visit.

ABOUT YOU

Which statement describes you (check all that apply)?

- I am sometimes unsteady on my feet
- I am sometimes dizzy
- I have fallen recently
- I have almost fallen recently
- I have had a broken bone in the last 5 years
- I have vision problems
- I don't exercise much
- My medication makes me dizzy
- My medication makes me drowsy

RESOURCES

Fracture risk: www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Falls/adulthipfx.html

National Osteoporosis Foundation: www.nof.org

Bone density test: www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/007197.htm