

# Irish Osteoporosis Society

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## What is Osteoporosis?

Bone is a living tissue that is constantly being removed and replaced. As we get older, more bone is naturally lost than is replaced, but people with osteoporosis lose more bone than people who do not have the disease. Osteoporosis causes bones to become fragile and therefore they break easily e.g. through a minor bump or fall from a standing position or less.

## Who is affected?

It is estimated that 300,000 people in Ireland have Osteoporosis. One in four men and one in two women over 50 will fracture a bone as a result of osteoporosis, and children can also be affected. 90% of hip fractures are due to osteoporosis, yet only approximately 15% of people with osteoporosis are diagnosed.

## How is Osteoporosis diagnosed?

Osteoporosis is a preventable and treatable disease for the majority of people, but early diagnosis is essential for the best prognosis. A DXA scan of your spine and hips is the best method for diagnosing osteoporosis and is highly recommended if you are at risk.



## Why is it a “Silent disease”?

There are NO signs or symptoms of osteoporosis prior to a person breaking a bone. However, the effects of Osteoporosis are not silent, so it is important to be proactive in knowing the risk factors and getting tested.

## What are the risk factors?

There are over 60 risk factors for Osteoporosis, but the most common ones are listed below:

- Menopause
- Genetics
- Steroids
- Most treatments for cancer
- Coeliac disease
- Anorexia/bulimia
- Many medications such as Warfarin and Heparin
- Low calcium and vitamin intake
- Physiological or psychological stress
- Smoking and excess alcohol

## Commitment

The Irish Osteoporosis Society is committed to raising awareness of Osteoporosis and to supporting people with or at risk of the disease.

We run the only Osteoporosis helpline in the country, and over 300,000 people in Ireland have Osteoporosis. As a member of the Charity or a beneficiary of our services and awareness programmes, you can benefit from our services and support.

## What can I do to keep my bones strong?

Ensure to take the daily-recommended amount of Calcium and Vitamin D3, essential nutrients for both the prevention and treatment of osteoporosis. Calcium is found in foods such as dairy products, bread, nuts, oily fish, and dark green vegetables. Vitamin D3 can be gained from 10-15 minutes of sun exposure a day or foods such as oily fish, dairy products, and foods fortified with Vitamin D.

Appropriate, weight-bearing exercise is essential at all ages to maintain and increase bone density and strength. Examples of weight bearing activities include dancing, walking, running, soccer, tennis, soccer, stair climbing, and weight training.

## What about men?

Men are at a disadvantage when it comes to Osteoporosis because it is widely considered to be a condition that only affects older women.

-The most common risk factor for men of developing osteoporosis is low levels of testosterone, = hypogonadism  
-other risk factors specific to men include klinefelter's syndrome, removed testes, mumps after puberty, and injury/infection to the testes.

We strive to keep raising awareness and providing information and support to help those affected maintain their independence and quality of life.

## How can I help the Irish Osteoporosis Society?

The Irish Osteoporosis Society is the only Charity in Ireland that deals specifically with this "Silent disease." We operate a support helpline and distribute information to the public as well as health care professionals throughout the nation.

1) Enjoy our membership benefits and support our mission by becoming a member of the IOS for just €25 a year.

2) Send us "your story" for our website, newsletter and/or social media. This will be used to raise awareness of the condition and inform people that it is treatable.

3) Hold an annual fundraiser for the IOS: anything from a Coffee Morning to a Mini Marathon.

4) Help us out with a donation or corporate sponsorship from your business. Our charity does not receive government funding and depends on your generosity to keep our services running!

5) Consider including the IOS in your will and leave a legacy that can benefit thousands of people in the future.

6) Involve your co-workers! Suggest holding an Osteoporosis awareness lecture at your office or encourage your company to fund an Osteoporosis project.

7) Marie Murphy designs fitness programmes for general health, athlete training, and the prevention of disease. If interested, please contact us!



Please log onto our website: [www.irishosteoporosis.ie](http://www.irishosteoporosis.ie), "like" us on Facebook, or follow us on Twitter (@IrishOsteo) to receive more information and keep up to date with news and events.