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Bone densitometer measures fracture risk

If you are a woman who is 65 or older, you are more at risk of a hip fracture than for stroke, breast cancer or diabetes. Plus, your risk of an osteoporotic fracture is greater than your risk of breast, ovarian and uterine cancer combined.

Hip fracture is actually the second most common osteoporotic fracture. The most common type is a vertebral or compression fracture.

Osteoporosis is a skeletal disorder characterized by low bone mass that can lead to fractures. Women lose more bone than men and develop lower bone mass than men. Women start losing bone mass as early as their late 20s.

Some of the risk factors for osteoporosis include heredity, menopause, advanced age, smoking, a sedentary lifestyle, low calcium and vitamin D intake and being Caucasian or Asian.

To diagnose possible osteoporosis, we use a bone densitometer, which we have in our office. This device measures the density of the bone in the hip and the lower back. This is a painless x-ray that takes less than 30 minutes to perform.

If osteoporosis is diagnosed, it is treated



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with calcium and vitamin D supplements along with weight-bearing exercise. Medications are also often helpful. They include Evista, Actonel, Fosamax, Miacalcin and hormones.

With proper diagnosis, osteoporosis can be treated in most cases.

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