

Bone Health Guide and Risk Assessment

Osteoporosis (brittle bone) is a common problem in older persons and can be present without any symptoms for decades until the bone fractures. Certain people are more likely to develop osteoporosis than others and the risk factors that increase the likelihood are categorised as 'non-modifiable' and 'modifiable'. By understanding the risk factors, you can change and make healthier choices and ensure a healthier set of bones as you age!

Non-modifiable risk factors include:

1. Increasing age;
2. Female sex;
3. Family history of osteoporosis;
4. Low body weight (BMI less than 18.5); and
5. Menopausal state.

Modifiable risk factors – which are controllable through medication and/or lifestyle change – include:

1. Diet – Excessive consumption of caffeine and salt, smoking and alcohol abuse can affect calcium metabolism. Inadequate consumption of calcium and vitamin D can affect bone formation and these requirements increase with age;
2. Sedentary lifestyle; and
3. Certain medical problems which can increase bone loss. These include anorexia, thyroid problems, bowel diseases and rheumatoid arthritis. Patients on certain medications like steroids are also at increased risk.

Dual Energy X-ray Absorptiometry, or DEXA scanning, is currently the most widely used method to measure bone mineral density. Individuals with risk factors should consider a DEXA screening test. Please discuss with your primary care doctor.

THE OSTEOPOROSIS SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR ASIANS (OSTA)

To find out your likelihood of developing osteoporosis, you can use the Osteoporosis Self-Assessment Tool for Asians. Please note that this health tool is specially designed for Asian women.

THE OSTEOPOROSIS SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR ASIANS (OSTA SCORE)

Age (yrs) \	Weight (KG)										
	40–44	45–49	50–54	55–59	60–64	65–69	70–74	75–79	80–84	85–89	90–94
40 to 44	LOW RISK										
45 to 49											
50 to 54											
55 to 59	MEDIUM RISK										
60 to 64											
65 to 69											
70 to 74											
75 to 79											
80 to 84	HIGH RISK										
85 to 89											
90 to 94											
95 to 99											

UNDERSTANDING YOUR OSTA SCORE

Risk category	What does it mean?
High	Your risk of having osteoporosis is HIGH. About 61% of individuals in the high-risk group have osteoporosis. Consult your doctor to have your bone mass checked.
Moderate	Your risk of having osteoporosis is MODERATE. About 15% of individuals in the moderate-risk group have osteoporosis. See your doctor to determine whether you have any other risk factors.
Low	Your risk of having osteoporosis is LOW. Only about 3% of individuals in the low-risk group have osteoporosis. However, if you have any of the risk factors listed on page 27, please see a doctor. For more information, you may wish to see www.osteoporosis.org.sg .