Myths and Facts about Osteoporosis

Myth: Osteoporosis is a disease that only affects “old” women

Fact: 1 in every 3 women over the age of 50 already has osteoporosis. One third of a women’s lifetime bone loss can occur in the first 5 years after menopause. One in eight men will also develop this disease in their lifetime.

Myth: At 50, I only need to be concerned about cancer and heart disease

Fact: Nearly 1 in every 2 women over the age of 50 will suffer an osteoporotic fracture in her remaining years; one in three women for women of colour. To put it another way, a woman’s risk of osteoporosis is equal to her combined risk of breast, ovarian and uterine cancer (National Osteoporosis Foundation – www.nof.org) Osteoporotic fractures can lead to pain, height loss and a humped back (known as a “Dowager’s Hump”) causing difficulty in walking. Tooth loss can also occur.

Myth: I feel fine and take care of myself. I don’t have to be concerned about osteoporosis

Fact: Even though you feel fine, eat a healthy diet, exercise, and take calcium, you could still be at risk for or already have osteoporosis. This may be due to the following risk factors:

- Being post menopausal
- Low bone mass as confirmed by a Bone Mineral Density test
- Family history of osteoporosis
- Thin or small build
- Smoking
- Excess Alcohol consumption
- Inadequate exercise
- Too little calcium (now or as a child)
- Medications – e.g. steroid therapy
- Early menopause (before age 45)

Myth: There is no quick, easy way to find out if I have osteoporosis

Fact: A Bone Mineral Density test is a safe, painless way to assess bone mass and help a doctor confirm a diagnosis of osteoporosis.

Speak with your doctor, and get the facts!