

Facts about osteoporosis

Osteoporosis – Bone fragility

Osteoporosis is the medical term for bone fragility, which is one of our most widespread diseases. Our skeleton is in a lifelong process of rebuilding itself in order to accommodate to load carrying. The rebuilding process involves one process of tearing down the bone and another of rebuilding the bone. During the rebuilding phase new bone tissue replaces old bone tissue. As we age this process becomes imbalanced causing a loss in bone tissue and therefore an increased risk of fracture. The skeleton is then said to be osteoporotic. Medical treatment is available to avoid this disease and lower the risk of osteoporosis.

Factors that increase the risk of osteoporosis

Heredity is to some level the cause behind osteoporosis. If close relatives have suffered fragility fractures at a young age, e.g. fractures of vertebra or hip, then there may be a cause to investigate further. Women have a higher tendency to osteoporosis than men, this is caused by, amongst other things, the lower levels of oestrogen after the menopause. Men have a risk caused by the lower levels of testosterone as they too age. Some medicines like cortisone, medicine for epileptics or high doses of thyroid hormone are also factors for an increased risk of poor bone quality. Medical conditions that also increase the risk are Rheumatoid arthritis and inflammatory intestinal diseases. Other causes can be smoking, eating disorders, lack of physical activity and lack of sunshine.

Symptom

Osteoporosis is a “quiet” disease, meaning that there are often no visible symptoms until a fragility caused fracture occurs. Some fractures in the disks in the vertebra may not even be noticed, but cause a changed posture, pain and shortening of the body. Other types of fractures e.g. in the wrist occur even at very low impact when carrying loads or falling. These types of fractures would not have happened with a healthy skeleton.

Treatment

There is no known treatment to restore the skeleton fully. Therefore it is vital to get the diagnosis as early as possible, preferably before the first fracture. There is available medicine that slows down the deterioration of bone and thereby increases the bone mass. In order to get as good an effect as possible it is important to also supply the body's need for physical activity and a sufficient intake of calcium and vitamin D.



Brenda is lucky to be alive, although most days she doesn't think so

Brenda was 61 when she had a stroke. Previously, she had been a PT instructor in a girls school, rode and bred horses, was the life and soul of the party and could “talk for England”.

All that happened was she simply slipped on a wet floor and fractured her ankle. In the weeks after with her leg immobilised she developed deep vein thromboses (DVTs). These eventually broke off, lodging in a vein in her brain causing a stroke. Now she is paralysed down her left side and finds it hard to put two or three words together and that is after three years rehabilitation in the best hospitals in the world. Her consultants and her therapists keep telling her how lucky she is, but she feels guilty for not feeling lucky and often spends most of the day feeling a failure.

All this could have been prevented with a simple test for osteoporosis, the silent killer. Research done at the University of Manchester has shown that by diagnosing osteoporosis early, bone quality can be improved and so the risk of fracture minimised.

Special computer software developed in Sweden together with research from the University of Manchester allows your dentist to detect changes in bone density suggesting your tendency of this disease. All this can be done in a matter of minutes using an existing X-ray. The results will allow your dentist to decide if you need a referral to your GP for further investigation and possible treatment for osteoporosis.

The choice is yours – prevention or a life sentence – Brenda knows which one she would have chosen if she had had the choice.

Ask your dentist now about Jaw-X or get a referral to a dentist who offers this service.

Osteoporosis is one of the most common diseases leading to bone fractures and vertebra compression. Approved preventive medical treatment is available, but very few people with osteoporosis are actually diagnosed and treated. Even though every patient with osteoporosis does not sustain a fracture, their risk of fracture is much higher due to lower bone density and poor bone mass. Osteoporosis not only affects postmenopausal women to a very high percentage but also men above 60 years of age.

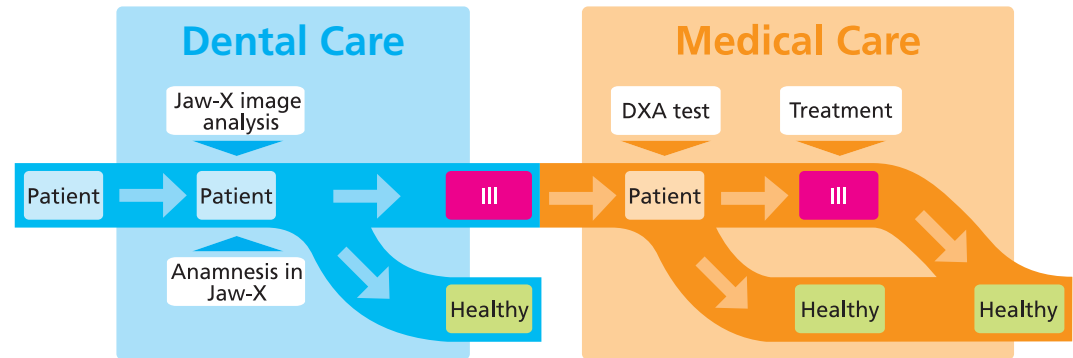
Connection

Scientific research has shown that dental X-rays analysed with computer software can be used to detect low bone quality. Furthermore there is a proven clear correlation between overall bone quality and the bone quality of the jaw bone. By detecting osteoporosis at an early stage preventive treatment can be provided in time and bone fractures avoided.

The test

Your dentist will either use an existing X-ray or take a new X-ray. The computer software Jaw-x analyses the bone quality on the X-ray with patented technology. If the result of the analysis shows low bone quality a few questions regarding heredity and medication will be asked and added to the analysis. If the end result shows that you are at risk your dentist will refer you to your General Practitioner for further investigation and treatment.

The method used is called Jaw-x and works like this:



- You benefit by finding out if you are at risk at an early stage and get referred to your medical doctor if needed therefore getting medical treatment at a much earlier stage rather than suffering bone fragility and needing treatment when the disease is further developed.
- There is no risk involved in this test as the X-ray dose is low and only what the dentist uses for every day examinations.

Please let us know if you have any questions!

We care about you!