Does Osteoporosis Run in Your Family?

If one of your parents has experienced a broken bone, especially a broken hip, you may need to be screened earlier for osteoporosis. This is a medical condition where bones become weak and are more likely to break. Share your family health history with your doctor. Your doctor can help you take steps to strengthen weak bones and prevent broken bones.

How Can Osteoporosis Affect My Health?

People with osteoporosis are more likely to break bones, most often in the hip, forearm, wrist, and spine. While most broken bones are caused by falls, osteoporosis can weaken bones to the point which a break can occur more easily. As you get older, you are more likely to have osteoporosis. Osteoporosis can cause the bones in the spine to break and begin to collapse, so some people with it get shorter and are not able to stand up straight.

How Can I Find Out If I Have Osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis is more common in women. Screening for osteoporosis is greatly recommended for women age 65 and older or women between 50 and 64 who have certain risk factors, including having a parent who has broken a hip. Screenings are commonly done using a type of low level x-ray called dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA). Screening can also show if you have low bone mass, meaning your bones are weaker than normal and you are likely to develop osteoporosis.