

Fracture Liaison Service

The aim of the Western Health and Social Care Trust (Western Trust) Fracture Liaison Service is to identify people aged 50-75 who have suffered a first fracture. The service then provides assessment, advice and treatment recommendations to help prevent the risk of further fractures.

Osteoporosis means 'porous bones'. It is the thinning of the honey-comb-like internal structure of bone. This makes bones more fragile making fractures more likely even from small knocks and falls.

“Osteoporosis affects 1 in 2 women and 1 in 5 men over 50 years of age”.

What are the risk factors for osteoporosis?

- Early menopause – having a menopause or hysterectomy (before the age of 45)
- Family history of osteoporosis
- A previous fracture
- Being underweight
- Medications – Steroids and some drugs for treatment of breast cancer
- Smoking
- Alcohol – an intake of more than 3 units daily
- Chronic immobility
- Other medical conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes and digestive disorders causing malabsorption of food.

What can I do to help my bones?

Diet – eat a balanced diet, rich in calcium. Foods rich in calcium include:

- Dairy products, milk, yogurt, cheese, try to include these in your daily diet.
- Fish e.g. pilchards, sardines, salmon.
- Green leafy vegetables
- Dried fruit
- Kidney beans, baked beans

Vitamin D – Helps the body absorb calcium obtained from careful exposure to sunlight.

Exercise – Bones need regular weightbearing activity to help to keep them strong. The level of activity you can hope to achieve will depend on your mobility prior to your fracture.

Being active is also very important to maintain and improve bone and muscle strength. Co-ordination and balance and reducing your risk of falling.

Smoking – Do not smoke.

Alcohol – Do not drink more than 3 units of alcohol daily.

Bone Density Scan



You may be invited to attend for a bone density scan known as a DXA scan. This is carried out in Altnagelvin Hospital or South West Acute Hospital.

The DXA scan measures the density of bones to help find out whether you have osteoporosis or are at risk of developing it.

The DXA scan is like having a normal X-ray and uses minimal radiation (less than X-ray). You will be asked to lay on a flat bed not a tunnel and the scan usually takes between 10 – 15 minutes. The lower spine and hips are normally scanned.

No preparation for the test is required. It is a painless procedure and you can go straight home afterwards. Some people may not need to have this scan but may still be recommended treatment.

Treatment – There are effective drug treatments that can lower risk of further broken bones. Your risk of future fracture risk will be assessed and treatment recommended if necessary.

Avoid fractures

Take care of your back

Try to maintain a good posture when standing or sitting

Try to avoid stooping, forward, lifting and twisting simultaneously

Take steps to reduce your risk of falling

Keep active – physical activity i.e. walking, gardening, dancing & Tai Chi can help to improve mobility, strength, balance and flexibility

Eat well and drink plenty of fluids

Make sure your home environment is safe eg good lighting, secure carpets, hand rails

Wear good, supportive footwear

Have regular eye tests and foot care

Have regular health and medication checks with your GP

Limit alcohol intake

Useful Contacts and Addresses

Western Health and Social Care Trust

Fracture Liaison Service Nurses:

Denise Pattison

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Email: denise.pattison@westerntrust.hscni.net

Rhonda Hunter

Telephone: (028) 71345171 Ext 214075

Email: rhonda.hunter@westerntrust.hscni.net

Smoking Cessation Clinic

Telephone: 0800 917 9388

Website: www.westerntrust.hscni.net

The National Osteoporosis Society

Camerton, Bath

Telephone: 01761 471771

Helpline: 0845 450 0230

Fax: 01761 471104

Website: www.nos.org.uk

AGE UK

Telephone: 0800 1696565

Website: www.ageuk

Fracture Liaison & Osteoporosis Service

