



Rose Clinic Bray

Osteopenia

Osteopenia and Your Bone Health

Osteopenia is the early stage of osteoporosis and signals a higher risk of developing it. A diagnosis of osteopenia is an opportunity to take proactive steps to protect your bones and prevent further bone loss, which can lead to fractures.

Most fractures actually occur in the moderate to marked osteopenia range, so addressing it early is crucial.

Osteopenia has no symptoms and is typically diagnosed through a DEXA scan. This test measures your bone density and highlights any areas of concern.

How to Protect Your Bones

1. **Vitamin D**

- Vitamin D is essential for helping your body absorb calcium, a key nutrient for strong bones.
- Most women benefit from taking a daily vitamin D supplement, available over the counter at your pharmacy.
- You can also get vitamin D from sunlight exposure and foods such as oily fish (salmon, sardines, mackerel), egg yolks, and fortified foods.

2. **Calcium**

- Calcium is vital for bone strength and reducing the risk of fractures.
- Calcium-rich foods include:
 - Dairy products: milk, yogurt, kefir, and cheese
 - Green leafy vegetables: broccoli and cabbage
 - Nuts and seeds: almonds, sesame seeds
 - Fish with soft bones: sardines, whitebait
 - Pulses, tofu, dried fruit, and fortified plant-based milks or cereals

3. **Exercise**

- Regular weight-bearing exercises like walking, running, Pilates, yoga, and weight training help maintain bone and muscle strength.

4. **HRT (Hormone Replacement Therapy)**

- Taking HRT alongside vitamin D, calcium, and regular exercise provides additional protection against bone density loss and fractures.

Follow-Up Care

If you've been diagnosed with osteopenia based on a recent DEXA scan, we typically recommend repeating the scan every two years to monitor your bone health.

Additional Resources

- Irish Osteoporosis Society
- Women's Health Concern: Osteoporosis & Bone Health Following Menopause