

Osteoporosis Medicines



You are being advised to take a medicine to prevent or treat osteoporosis. You may be given more than one. This depends on your needs. Below you can read about the different medicines approved for use in the U.S. Talk to your healthcare provider if you have questions.

Hormone therapy

Hormone therapy can ease symptoms of postmenopause. It may also be used to help keep bone density. It may be in pill or skin patch form.

Benefits may include:

- Reducing bone loss and risk of a break or fracture
- Increasing bone density in the hip and spine

Side effects may include:

- Nausea
- Breakthrough bleeding, bloating, and weight gain
- Breast soreness
- High blood pressure
- Increased risk of blood clots in the legs and of certain cancers

SERMs

Selective estrogen receptor modulators (SERMs) act on estrogen in the body. They come in pill form.

Benefits may include:

- Increasing bone density in the hip and spine
- Preventing bone loss
- Reducing risk of spinal fracture

Side effects may include:

- Hot flashes
- Leg cramps
- Increased risk of blood clots in the legs

This treatment is only approved for postmenopausal women.

Calcitonin

Calcitonin is a hormone. It comes in a nasal spray. It can be used in place of the other medicines. But it may not be as effective. And it does not prevent osteoporosis.

Benefits may include:

- Slowing bone loss
- Increasing bone density in the spine

Side effects may include:

- Swelling, soreness, or irritation inside the nose
- Nasal congestion and runny nose

Teriparatide

Teriparatide is a hormone. It helps stimulate bone formation. It is given as an injection under your skin every day. Your healthcare provider will show you how to give yourself the shot. It's important to give the shot at about the same time every day.

Benefits may include:

- Slowing bone loss
- Increasing bone strength and density

Side effects may include:

- Heartburn or upset stomach
- Redness or irritation at the injection site
- Leg cramps

More serious side effects that you should tell your healthcare provider about right away are:

- Lightheadedness or feeling faint
- Blood in your urine
- Muscle weakness

Denosumab

Denosumab is a type of immune therapy medicine. It works by decreasing bone loss. It is given to women after menopause and to adults who need to take corticosteroid medicine for 6 months or more. It is given as an injection under your skin once every 6 months. It is often given by a healthcare provider.

Benefits may include:

- Building new bone
- Reducing risk of bone fracture

Side effects may include:

- Red, dry, or itchy skin
- Constipation, diarrhea, or upset stomach
- Headache
- Runny nose

More serious side effects that you should tell your healthcare provider about right away are:

- Chest pain
- Breathing problems
- Signs of infection like a fever, cough, or sore throat

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