

Managing Osteoporosis to reduce the risk of falls

Falls are the number one cause of accidental injury in older Australians. 1 in 4 people who are aged 65 and over have at least 1 fall per year.

According to the National Aged Care Mandatory Quality Indicator (QI) program (Snapshot April – June 2025) 6.8% of residents experienced one or more falls and 1.7% experienced a fall resulting in major injury.

Effective management often includes regular weight-bearing exercise and lifestyle adjustments, such as smoking cessation and increased safety measures to prevent falls.

A fall or fracture can lead to chronic pain, a loss of independence, disability and in severe cases premature death – so managing bone health to avoid fractures is an important priority.

Treatment: Osteoporosis treatment focuses on strengthening existing bone, reducing bone density loss, and preventing fractures.

Osteoporosis is a chronic condition that is linked to a decrease in bone density and increased fracture risk.

Diagnosis: Osteoporosis is diagnosed with a bone density scan.

There are over 183,000 broken bones attributed to poor bone health each year. Common sites where broken bones occur are the hip, wrist and spine.

It is more common in women, particularly after menopause, and in people over 70, with one fracture occurring every 2.7–3.6 minutes due to weak bones.

TREATMENTS

Slow bone loss, improve bone density and reduce the risk of fractures.

Bisphosphonates: Alendronate, Risedronate (oral), Zoledronate (IV)

- Complement medication use with recommended calcium, vitamin D and exercise levels
- Consider full dental assessment and complete any dental surgical procedures before starting a bisphosphonate.

Denosumab (6 monthly injection)

- Relatively fast drop-off in benefit after cessation – other osteoporosis treatment should be prescribed to maintain bone protection.

Raloxifene

- Specifically for postmenopausal women
- Useful for high-risk breast cancer patients with osteoporosis (dual protective effect)

Hormone Replacement Therapy

- Prevents bone loss rather than rebuilding bone density once it is already severely lost
- Ideal for women with premature ovarian insufficiency (before age 45) or those with early menopause up to age 60

FACT SHEET
Preventing falls
in residential
aged care
services