



This article contains general information dealing with health and wellness. It does not constitute medical advice and should not be relied on for diagnosing or treating any illness, injury or disease.

June 3, 2026

Male Bone Density – What You Need to Know

I recently participated in the BCPVPA “Leading Through Midlife” series where we learned how our bodies change with time, including our bone mass. I also recently completed a bone density test to assess my own risks, which made me wonder: *do men face this same level of bone mass change as they age?* It turns out that while they do not lose bone density at the same rate as women, it can still be a health issue for men.

In Canada, men begin to lose bone mass after age 40, as the body’s natural process of breaking down old bone starts to outpace the creation of new bone. While osteoporosis is more commonly associated with women, it is a significant, under-diagnosed health issue for men, especially as they age.

Here are some quick statistics and facts from osteoporosis.ca about male bone density:

- **One in five men** will suffer from an osteoporotic fracture during their lifetime.
- **More than 80% of all fractures** in people 50+ are caused by osteoporosis.
- Peak bone density is reached around age 30–40: bone mass in Canadian men **over 40 begins a gradual decline of approximately 0.5% or more per year**. About 33% of men over 40 are at risk for osteoporotic fractures, with more than 10% of men this age already diagnosed with osteoporosis.
- As most people reach their maximum bone size and strength (known as peak bone mass) by age 30, bone-healthy behaviours are important from an early age to optimize bone health and reduce the risk of developing osteoporosis later in life.

Data shows that a significant percentage of men over 40 face risks for fractures, often due to undetected bone loss, as bones may deteriorate for years without any symptoms. By the time a man’s affected bones

break or fracture, the disease has already advanced and is less treatable. The most frequent type of fractures due to osteoporosis includes the hip, spine, wrist, and shoulder.

Very few men get tested for bone density. Even when they have had a fracture, less than 10% of Canadians over 40 get their Bone Mineral Density (BMD) tested after a fracture, making them high-risk for future breaks.

Preventive Actions and Management

What can you do to prevent losing bone mass? Depending on your age, the key prevention years – *before 30!* – may have passed. However, there are still steps you can take to protect the bone mass you have retained to date.

- **Lifestyle Changes:** A diet rich in calcium and vitamin D, along with weight-bearing exercises and smoking cessation, is recommended.
- **Targeted Calcium:** Men over 50 require 1,200 mg of calcium daily.
- **Get Screened:** [Osteoporosis Canada](#) advises discussing a bone density test (T-score) with a doctor, especially if you have risk factors.

If they have high-risk factors, it is recommended that men get a bone density test at age 70, or earlier (starting at age 50). Regardless of age, if you have broken a bone after a minor fall or trauma (fragility fracture), it is advised you get a bone density test. The scan measures bone mineral density to diagnose osteoporosis and estimate fracture risk.

Risk Factors for Men:

- Use of high-risk medication (e.g. prednisone for more than three months)
- Significant height loss (1.5 inches or more)
- Chronic conditions (e.g. rheumatoid arthritis, hypogonadism)
- Family history of hip fractures
- Low testosterone levels
- Smoking or excessive alcohol use

Doctors use bone density testing to:

- Identify decreases in bone density before you break a bone
- Determine your risk of broken bones (fractures)

- Confirm a diagnosis of osteoporosis
- Monitor osteoporosis treatment

The higher your bone mineral content, the denser your bones are. And the denser your bones, the stronger they generally are, and the less likely they are to break.

[Click here](#) to see when bone density testing is recommended: speak with your physician for more information.

It is not just women who need to be concerned about losing bone mass as they age; men also need to be aware, and to take precautions to remain fracture free well into their retirement years!

Sources

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/bone-density-test/about/pac-20385273>

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/82-625-x/2021001/article/00004-eng.htm>

<https://osteoporosis.ca/facts-and-stats/>

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Morandini', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rochelle Morandini

Member Health & Well-Being, Director

If you would like to contribute or have ideas about what you would like to see in the ReFresh series, we would love to hear from you: contact rochelle@bcpvpa.bc.ca.