

CLINICAL RESEARCH & OSTEOPOROSIS NEWSLETTER

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Osteoporosis: Prevention & Treatment

Osteoporosis is a condition that weakens bones, making them more likely to break (fracture) in situations where a normal bone would not break. Fractures can have serious consequences, including pain, disability, death, and worst of all for many of us – loss of independence. Fortunately, there are many ways to make your bones less likely to break. Healthy lifestyle and good nutrition are the foundation of care. We recommend regular physical activity, not smoking, maintaining good balance, and of course, not falling! Doing these things is often called “prevention.” We usually think of this as prevention of osteoporosis. However, there is another way of viewing prevention; that is, prevention of fractures in people who already have osteoporosis.

Osteoporosis may be diagnosed in 3 different ways – when your bone density is low (T-score equal to or less than -2.5), when you have broken a bone that would not have broken if it were healthy, or when your risk of breaking bones is high with a formula called FRAX. Treatment is intended to make your bones stronger and to make you stronger so that you are less likely to fall and break a bone. While no treatment can eliminate the possibility of a broken bone, an effective treatment can greatly reduce the risk of that happening. There is also a risk of side effects from taking medication for osteoporosis. Because of that possibility, medication is not recommended unless the expected benefits of treatment greatly exceed the chance of having a serious side effect.

There is no one size fits all for osteoporosis medication. The best medicine for you is one that is selected according to your individual situation, which includes your level of fracture risk and consideration of other medical conditions, past experiences with medications, personal preference, and affordability. And you can always choose to take no medication.

At New Mexico Clinical Research & Osteoporosis Center, we have educational information about many approaches to osteoporosis prevention and treatment. We are happy to listen to your concerns and work with you to develop a plan that works for you. We will also monitor your progress to see that you are responding as expected. We welcome your questions if you want to learn more.

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Are you interested in participating in a research trial?

Our clinical research program is recruiting patients to participate in trials to test new medications and evaluate new uses for currently available drugs. By participating in a trial, you will have the opportunity to use one of these medications and have examinations and diagnostic testing at no cost to you. If you qualify for the trial, you may be compensated for your time and travel. Please take a few minutes to read the criteria for each trial listed in our section titled “Clinical Research News.”

If you think you may qualify for a trial or have questions about participating in clinical research trials, please call for more information at: [\(505\) 923-3232](tel:5059233232).

Feel free to pass this newsletter to a friend or relative who may be interested. The research trial information is updated often since we are continually starting new trials and closing existing trials. Call and give your information to our recruitment specialist for consideration for future trials.

Clinical Research News

High Cholesterol

We are looking for men and women diagnosed with high “bad” cholesterol and are currently treated with statin therapy. You may qualify if you:

- Are 18 years of age or older
- Have a history of a major cardiovascular event or have moderate to high risk for development of a first major cardiovascular event.

Sjögren’s Syndrome

We are looking for women diagnosed with Sjögren’s Syndrome. You may qualify if you:

- Are a woman between 18 to 65 years of age.
- Diagnosed with Sjögren’s Syndrome within the last 10 years.

Postmenopausal Osteoporosis

We are looking for women diagnosed with Postmenopausal Osteoporosis. You may qualify if you:

- Are a healthy, postmenopausal woman, between 55 to 80 years.
- Are not currently treated with osteoporosis medication
- Have qualifying T-scores at the lumbar spine, total hip/femoral neck.

*More trials coming in 2025....
Call today to be added to our patient
database and we will contact you
when new trials become available.*

*More criteria will apply.

Meet our Nurse Practitioners!

Desiree Sanchez, MSN, CNP-C, CCD



Desiree is a certified nurse practitioner. Desiree earned her Masters in nursing from Grand Canyon University in Phoenix Arizona. She completed her residency with Presbyterian, focusing on rural healthcare. She has 20 years of experience in the medical field as a nurse, patient care technician and medical assistant, providing care for the pediatric, adult, and geriatric patient populations.

Pamela Phillips, MSN, ARNP, CFNP-C



Pam has been a resident of New Mexico for over 45 years and has been working in health care in the New Mexico community for thirty years. She obtained her Associate Degree in Nursing at Albuquerque Technical Vocational Institute in 1992. She subsequently obtained her Bachelors Degree in Nursing at UNM in 2012 and Masters Degree in Family Nurse Practitioner at the University of St. Francis in 2021.

To view current and previous newsletters, visit our website at www.nmbonecare.com and look under the News tab.

Osteoporosis Foundation of New Mexico (OFNM)

We are excited to announce our collaboration with OsteoBoston to participate in their monthly support group meetings!

These meetings will typically take place on the first Tuesday of each month at 5:00 PM Mountain Time (MT) (4:00 pm PT; 6:00 pm CT; 7:00 pm ET)

You are warmly invited to join us for virtual educational presentations and engaging interactive discussions as part of this ongoing activity. Ask all the questions you have, learn from both experts and peers, and connect with a community of support.

These meetings are open to the public and offer an excellent opportunity to consult osteoporosis experts in a welcoming environment.

To begin receiving invitations for these meetings, please email cdobbins@pmlanners.net.

Please note that this support group is intended for patients.

If you'd like to support the Osteoporosis Foundation of New Mexico, donations can be made by visiting www.ofnm.org and clicking the blue "Donate" button at the top right. We are also looking for volunteers—please reach out to us at info@ofnm.org for more information.

We look forward to seeing you there!



www.ofnm.org

Ask Dr. Lewiecki about . . . OSTEOPOROSIS

Dear Dr. Lewiecki – I have been taking a pill every week for 3 years to treat my osteoporosis, but I’m disappointed in the results. My bone density is still the same. My doctor told me to stop it since it is not working. What should I do? My mother was very stooped over at the end of her life and I don’t want to end up like her. Please help.

Roxanne P., Belen, NM

Dear Roxanne – It sounds like you are probably taking alendronate, the generic form of Fosamax. This is the most common treatment for osteoporosis because it usually works well, is inexpensive, and covered by almost all insurance companies. With this treatment, we expect bone density to increase for the first several years you are taking it, and then plateau at that higher level. We know that from research studies involving many thousands of patients. However, you are probably not the same as patients in the research studies.

Most of us have diseases and conditions in addition to osteoporosis that would exclude us from participating in research. Therefore, we may not respond to treatment the same as the research patients.

Also, keep in mind that the response to treatment that is reported in research is an average response. This means that

about half of the patients did better than the average and half of the patients did worse. You cannot expect to respond to any treatment exactly the same as the average research patient.

You may be interested in knowing that many patients who do not improve bone density with treatment, and some who lose bone density, may still be responding to treatment with a reduction in the risk of breaking bones. How is this possible?

Osteoporosis medications can strengthen bones and reduce fracture risk in ways that are not always measured with bone density. This has much to do with the structure of bones at the microscopic level but is difficult to measure with the usual tests that are available.

To learn more about what to do now, please look at the column to the right on this page.

Mike Lewiecki

From the editor: If you have a question for Dr. Lewiecki, please send it by mail to the address on the front page of this newsletter, drop it off at the office, or email to jross@nmbonecare.com. It is not possible to respond to all questions, but those that are of general interest will be considered for publication.

RESPONDING TO OSTEOPOROSIS THERAPY

We all want to be good responders to treatment. It is like getting an “A” on a test at school. Since we usually start treatment because bone density is low, we naturally want to see a big increase in bone density with treatment. This is good thinking, because we know that the more bone density increased with treatment, the stronger the bones and the less likely they are to break. But, there is more to the story . . .

To respond to osteoporosis treatment, the medication has to get to your bones. This is a very important issue with taking pills, especially bisphosphonates, such as alendronate. This medication must be taken regularly and correctly for it to work. If you are not taking it when you first awaken, on an empty stomach, with a glass of plain water, without other pills or food, and waiting at least 30 minutes before eating or drinking anything else, it will not be absorbed well and may not reach your bones.

One of the ways we can find out if a medication is getting to your bones and having the desired effect is to measure a “bone turnover marker.” We typically do this with a simple blood test for CTX or P1NP. These results tell us what is happening with the activity of your bone cells and help decide whether to continue or change your treatment.



Support osteoporosis awareness and education in New Mexico and help to reduce the burden of osteoporotic fractures by making a tax-deductible donation or bequest to the Osteoporosis Foundation of New Mexico.

Donations may be conveniently submitted by credit card online at www.ofnm.org. For more information, call 505.857.3956.