

# Treating Osteoporosis with Chinese Herbal Medicine

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**O**steoporosis is a bone disorder that primarily affects aging individuals. These people gradually lose bone mass density over a period of several years. As a result of osteoporosis, their bones become weak and fragile, and they have much higher risk of bone fracture from minor injuries. Furthermore, individuals with osteoporosis often require an extended period of time for recovery after an injury, which is often complicated with infection.

Osteoporosis is six times more common in women than in men because a tremendous amount of jing (essence) is lost during the process of pregnancy and delivery. We are born with a finite amount of jing and our lifestyle determines how quickly we burn through it. Post-menopausal osteoporosis is most common and happens between 51 to 75 years of age. Women who have children may see signs and symptoms of osteoporosis earlier than those who have less or no children.

The western medical approach is to use drugs called biphosphonates, a category of drugs that include Fosamax (alendronate), Actonel (risedronate), Didronel (etidronate), Aredia (pamidronate), and Skelid (tiludronate). On average, these drugs do indeed increase bone mass density by 3 to 5% after continuous use for three years. They cause numerous side effects, however, such as stomach irritation, and may increase the risk of cancer (thyroid adenoma and adrenal pheochromocytoma) and fertility impairment (inhibition of ovulation, and testicular and epididymal atrophy). Furthermore, there is evidence that use of these drugs do not decrease the incidence of bone fracture. Though these drugs increase bone mass density, the bones remain brittle and are susceptible to fracture. This is evident as the use of biphosphonates is linked with increased risks of osteonecrosis of the jaw (1 in 952 cases) and subtrochanteric or femoral shaft fractures (274% increased risk). [i],[ii]. This happens because the dead bone cells are not removed from the bone matrix and new bone cells just pack in around these dead cells. It is often said that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. In this case, the dead bone cell becomes the weakest link.



In menopausal women, hormone replacement therapy may be used to decrease the loss of bone mass density. These drugs, however, must be prescribed and monitored very carefully, as use of these hormone substances have been shown to significantly increase risk of cancer, such as breast cancer (by 20 to 30%), endometrial cancer (by 6-8 folds), and ovarian cancer (by 10 to 20%). Other side effects and adverse reactions of hormone replacement therapy include gallbladder disease, thromboembolic disease, and photosensitivity. [iii] In brief, treatment of osteoporosis requires careful evaluation of risks versus benefits by both practitioners and patients.

Treating osteoporosis with acupuncture and the Chinese herbal formula Osteo 8 can strengthen bone without the side effects associated with the biphosphonate drugs or hormone replacement therapy. The herbal formula, Osteo 8 by Evergreen Herbs, facilitates the removal of the dead bone cells so new bone cells can fill in that space leading to stronger, healthier bones. This formula has an osteogenic effect to stimulate osteoblast proliferation and differentiation and an osteoprotective effect to prevent and treat osteoporosis. It also has an angiogenic effect to stimulate blood vessel formation, invigorate blood circulation, facilitate wound healing, enhance tissue regeneration, and facilitate healing of bone fractures. Some of the other conditions treated by Osteo 8 include soreness, weakness and pain in the bones, lower back and knees, the inability to stand for a prolonged period of time, pain or soreness that is aggravated by weight-bearing activities, tinnitus, hair loss, dryness, blurred vision and degeneration of muscle.

Herbs have been used with great success to nourish underlying deficiencies, and prevent and treat osteoporosis. Osteo 8 contains herbs that enter the Kidney to revitalize the body and replenish jing (essence). Osteoporosis or weakness of sinews and bones are the result of Kidney and Liver deficiencies. According to traditional Chinese medicine, the Kidney stores the jing (essence) that is vital for strong bones, and the Liver stores blood and controls the sinews and tendons. If the Liver and Kidney are deficient, bone, sinews and joints become weak. Therefore, treatment of bone disorders requires tonification of the Liver and Kidney. Osteo 8 is a well-balanced formula designed for women and men of all ages who want to maintain healthy bones.

In conclusion, drugs and herbs are both effective for prevention and treatment of osteoporosis. However, herbs are safe and natural, and should be considered the treatment of choice. Furthermore, patients are encouraged to adopt dietary and lifestyle recommendations to maximize the overall efficacy of the treatment program.

Call today, 239-260-4566, or schedule online, [www.AcupunctureSolutionsOnline.com](http://www.AcupunctureSolutionsOnline.com), to find out more about how acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine can help you keep your bones strong and live a healthy and active lifestyle.

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