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DEXA for Osteoporosis

The USPSTF recommends screening for osteoporosis in women aged 65 years or older and in younger women whose fracture risk is equal to or greater than that of a 65-year-old white woman who has no additional risk factors¹.

Limited evidence from good-quality studies found no benefit in predicting fractures from repeating bone measurement testing 4 to 8 years after initial screening².

RISK FACTORS	RECOMMENDATIONS
Fracture from minor trauma	Adequate calcium and vitamin D intake
Low body mass index	Weight bearing exercises
Corticosteroid Use	Smoking cessation
Physical inactivity	Moderation of alcohol intake
Alcohol use or smoking history	Fall prevention strategies
Endocrine disorder	120-300 minutes of moderate aerobic activity / week
Secondary causes of osteoporosis	

Dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry (DEXA) screening is not recommended for women under age 65 or men under 70 with no known risk factors, and the USPSTF found there is still insufficient evidence on screening for osteoporosis in men.

The USPSTF and Choosing Wisely does not address how often to have a bone density test after the initial screening.

References:

¹ U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. Screening for osteoporosis: recommendation statement. *Ann Intern Med*;154(5):356-64.

² Screening to Prevent Osteoporotic Fractures: An Evidence Review for the US Preventive Services Task Force: Evidence Synthesis No. 162. Rockville, MD: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality; 2018. AHRQ publication 15-05226-EF-1

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