



OSTEOPOROSIS

Bottom Line 'Evidence-Informed' Recommendations for Children/Youth with Cerebral Palsy who are Non-Ambulatory and at risk for or have Osteoporosis

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Plain Language Summary

Osteoporosis is a condition where there are weak bones that fracture or break easily.

Children with cerebral palsy who are using a wheelchair on a regular basis are at risk for osteoporosis because they do less standing and this weakens their bones. When a bone is weak it can break more easily. We want to try to prevent these breaks/fractures and keep the bones healthy and strong. If we can prevent fractures, this can also prevent pain in children with CP. One way to keep your bones healthy is to have good nutrition. Seeing your health care team and ensuring good nutrition including adequate Calcium in the diet is very important for bone health. This care pathway also recommends taking a Vitamin D supplement (between 800 to 1000 international units of Vitamin D 2 or 3) every day. Vitamin D is very important for strengthening bones. This care pathway also recommends seeing a physiotherapist and developing weight-bearing programs such as using a stander on a daily basis.

If your child does have osteoporosis or has had a fracture or broken bone, your doctor should do some extra medical tests. These tests may include bloodwork, X-rays of the bones, and a special X-ray called dual energy X-ray Absorptiometry scan (known as a DXA scan for short). The DXA scan looks at how strong the bones are. Medications such as bisphosphonates, which strengthen the bones, may also be prescribed by your doctor or a bone specialist after having a fracture. At this time we do not recommend starting the bisphosphonate medication before a fracture has occurred as doctors don't know the long term effects on growing bones in children.

