

# Postmenopausal Wellbeing

By

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The average life expectancy of women in Australia is currently 84 years. If the average age of onset of menopause is 50, then most women will spend at least 34 years, or 40%, of their lives after menopause.

## Complete expectation of life at selected ages — females

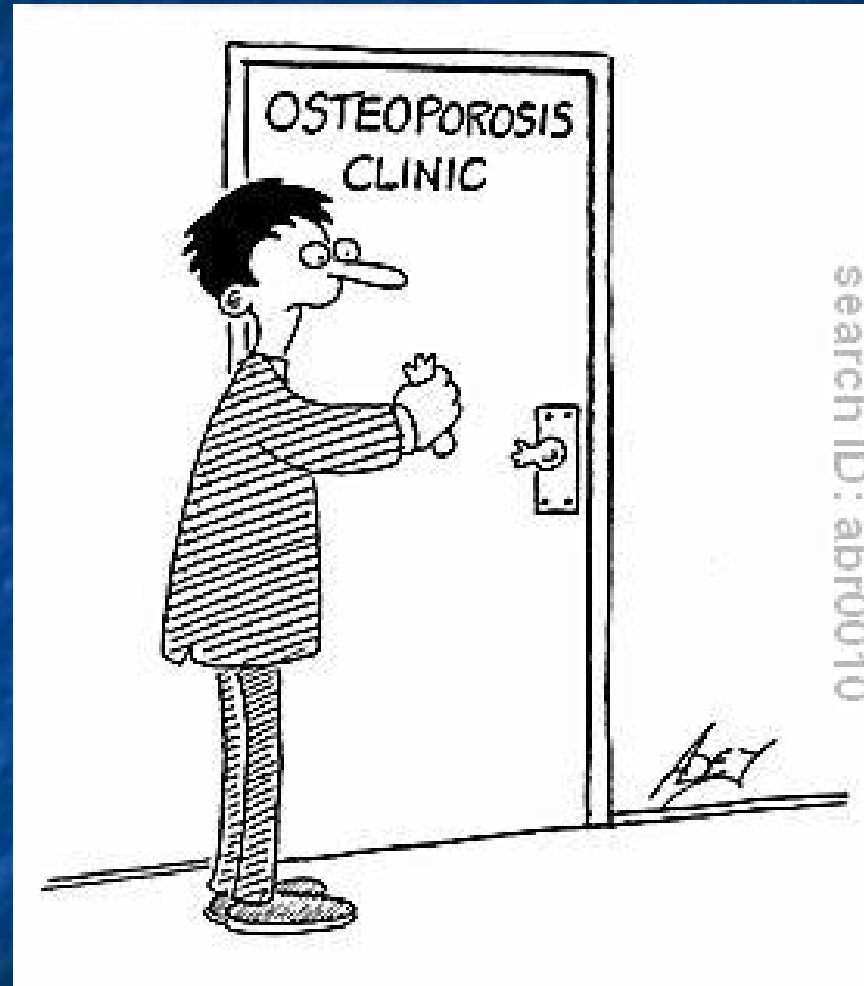
Life Tables	Age		
	0	30	65
1881-90	50.84	36.13	12.27
1891-00	54.76	37.86	12.75
1901-10	58.84	39.33	12.88
1920-22	63.31	41.48	13.60
1932-34	67.14	42.77	14.15
1946-48	70.63	44.08	14.44
1953-55	72.75	45.43	15.02
1960-62	74.18	46.49	15.68
1965-67	74.15	46.34	15.70
1970-72	74.80	46.86	16.09
1975-77	76.56	48.26	17.13
1980-82	78.27	49.67	18.00
1985-87	79.20	50.49	18.56
1990-92	80.39	51.48	19.26
1995-97	81.37	52.30	19.88
2000-02	82.87	53.72	21.15
2005-07	83.67	54.44	21.62

- Menopause has really become a major issue from 1900 onwards.
- Prior to 1900 – most women died before menopause started.

## 2 major issues

- Maintaining bone density
  - Regular weight bearing exercise
  - Appropriate calcium intake.
  - HRT (not going to be discussed with this presentation)
- Appropriate screening for cancer.
  - Regular Pap smears
  - Regular Breast screening
  - Other cancer screening (not going to be discussed)

# Bone Density



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# Osteoporosis prevention starts early!

- A woman's bones are most dense at age 30.
- Regular weight bearing exercise maintains bone density
  - Good = Walking, jogging, tennis, dancing, netball, resistance exercises (weights)
  - Bad = Swimming, cycling,
- All women need to plan for menopause from an early age



# Bone Density

- By age 45 = 1 - 2% of bone density is lost each year.
- After the onset of menopause – bone density is lost 2 – 4% per year.
- DXA scan is a very low dose X-ray test to determine a patient's bone density. Age, and weight are factored in to the results which are reported as "Z" score or "T" score.
- Z score relates to Standard Deviations away from people of the same age. T score relates to standard deviations away from an average young woman.

# Bone Density.

The 1996 Consensus Conference on Osteoporosis recommended the following :

## **T score (Young Normal BMD) Recommendation**

- $> + 1$  No further measurements
- 0 to 1 Repeat measure 5 to 10 years
- -1 to 0 Repeat measure 2 to 5 years
- -2.5 to -1 Prophylaxis
- $< -2.5$  Treatment

# Calcium intake.

- The recommended dietary intake for calcium is 1,300mg per day for women over the age of 50.

Food	Standard Serving Size	Calcium (mg)
Cheddar Cheese	40g (2 slices)	327
Flavoured Yoghurt	200g tub	316
Milk – Reduced Fat	250ml glass	352
Milk – Regular	250ml glass	285
Milk - Skim	250ml glass	320
Milk – calcium fortified	250ml glass	353

# Calcium Intake

- Calcium absorption may be reduced by excessive caffeine and alcohol, soft drinks containing phosphates and diets high in animal proteins. As well, calcium is continually lost from your body each day through your skin and nails, sweat, and urine.
- 3 serves of dairy will be adequate when combined with an average healthy diet.
- 600mg calcium supplement would normally be adequate for those who can't maintain normal dietary intake.
- Some preparations now have calcium with Vit D.

# Cancer Screening

- Cancers that commonly present after menopause
  - Cervical Cancer
  - Uterine Cancer
  - Breast Cancer
  - Ovarian Cancer
  - Bowel Cancer

# Cancer Screening

- Pap smears. Should be repeated every 2 years
- Women over 70 years who have had 2 normal smears in the last 5 years do not need to have Pap smears unless they want to.



YES, I DID HAVE MY MAMMOGRAM  
TODAY... WHY DO YOU ASK?

# Cancer Screening

- Mammograms should be offered every 2 years between age 50 and 69. BreastScreen NSW offers free mammograms.
- Women aged 40 – 49 can access free mammograms via BreastScreen – but the priority goes to women between 50 and 69.
- Women over 70 who wish to continue having mammograms can also access free mammograms.

# Cancer Screening

- Ovarian cancer – there is no national screening program in place.
- When a pap smear is taken– a bimanual examination should also be performed.
- Women with strong family history could consider regular (6 monthly) 6 monthly pelvic ultrasounds and CA125 blood tests – but there is no government funding for this.

# Cancer Screening

- There is no screening tests available for Uterine or endometrial cancer.
- 20% of all post menopausal bleeding is associated with endometrial cancer.
- If PMB occurs – referral to specialist gynaecologist is recommended. It would be useful to organise a pelvic ultrasound (to measure the endometrial thickness), and perform a PAP smear (if the most recent smear was > 12 months ago) prior to the appointment.

# Take Home Message

- 40% of a modern woman's life will be spent post menopause
- Maintain bone density with regular weight bearing exercise and adequate calcium intake
- Regular cancer screening tests are recommended as early detection offers better cure rates.

# References

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