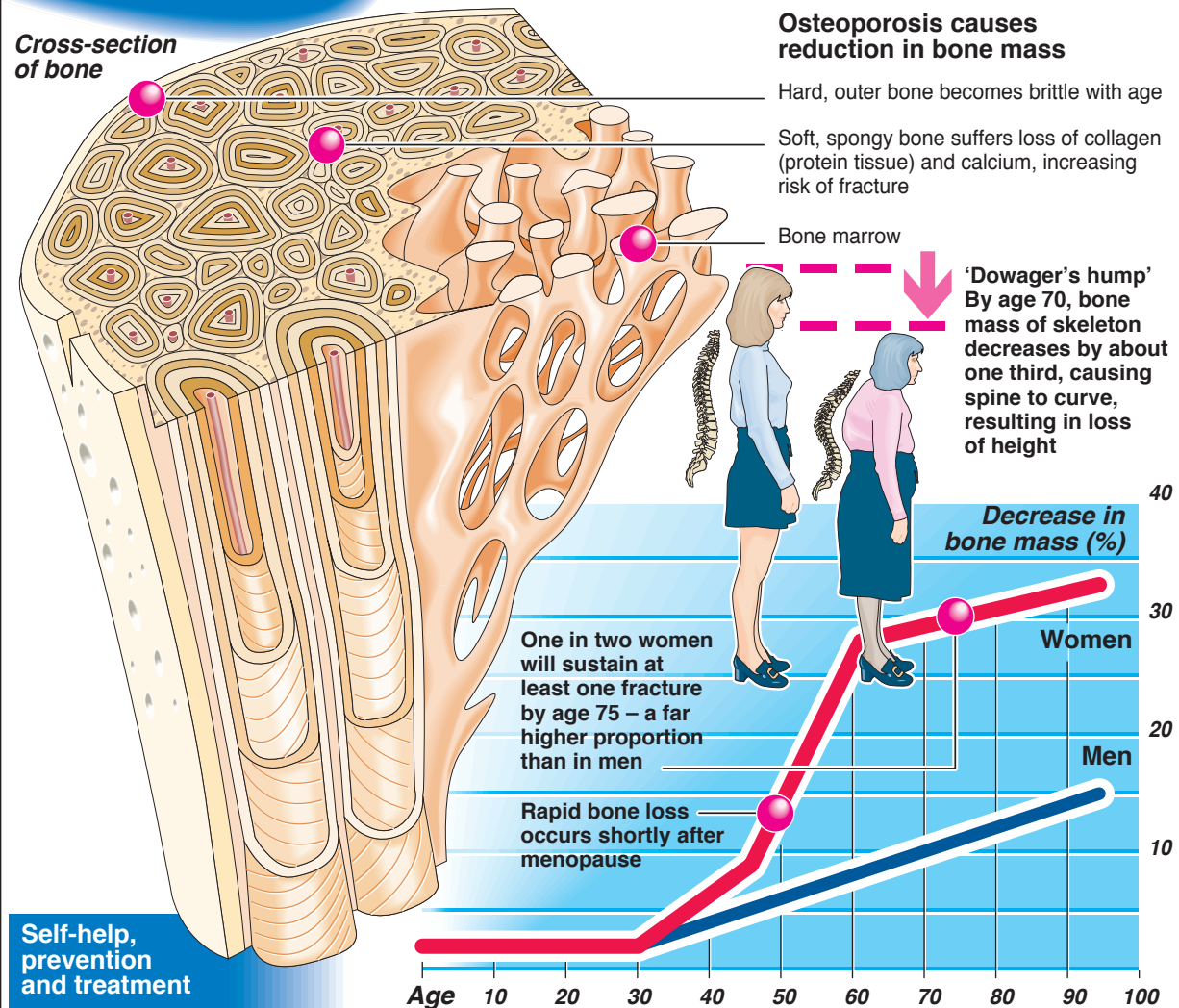


# Fragile after 50

**Osteoporosis** – a natural part of ageing – causes bones to become brittle and fracture easily. Half of all women are at risk and more die from the after-effects of osteoporosis fractures than from all cancers of the ovaries, cervix and womb put together. Men fare better but, even so, one in 12 suffers from osteoporosis after the age of 50



**Hospital costs for treating fractures** – mainly of the hip – are estimated at £615 million a year, but simple lifestyle changes can help prevent bone loss

**Diet:** Calcium, needed to ensure bones develop properly, is found in low-fat skimmed milk, canned sardines and spinach. **Vitamin D:** Two meals per week of fatty fish, such as mackerel or halibut, can reduce fracture risk by up to 20%.



**Natural oestrogens:** Found in beans and pulses



**Alcohol and smoking:** In women in their late 40s who have more than two alcoholic drinks daily, density of hip bone is



**Hormone replacement therapy (HRT):** Compensates for reduced oestrogen production and protects bones from mineral loss during and after menopause

**Selective oestrogen receptor modulators (SERMs):** Mimic bone-protecting action of

oestrogen while avoiding unwanted side effects

**Bisphosphonates:** Prevent breakdown of calcium phosphate – a key component of bones – and increase bone mass

**Vitamin D:** Can regulate bone

loss but production falls as people get older. Synthetic form available for treatment of established osteoporosis

**Calcitonin:** Natural hormone which slows process of bone loss. Treatment with synthetic form – *salcatonin* – can increase