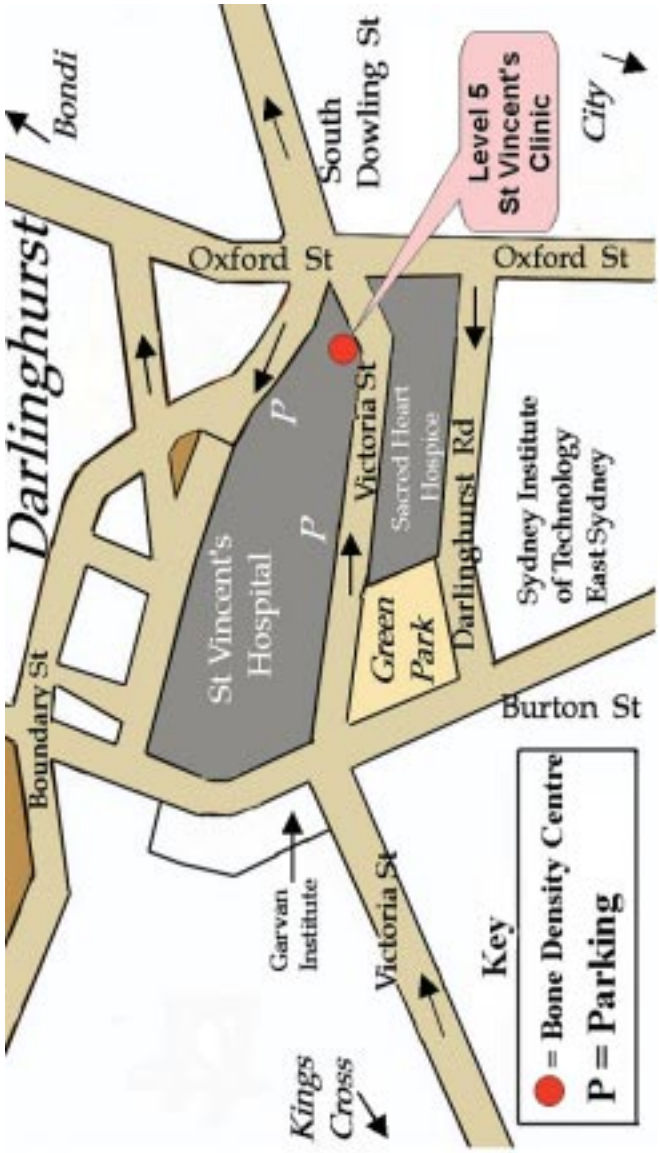

About Us.

Assoc Professor Nicholas Pocock and Professor Judith Freund each have over 17 years experience in densitometry and opened the first DXA centre in NSW in 1983.
Prof Pocock has extensive research and clinical experience in the field and is a member of the Government's National Health Priority Action Council Advisory Committee on Bone and Joint Disease. He is a senior staff specialist in Nuclear Medicine and Bone Densitometry at St Vincent's Hospital Darlinghurst.
Prof Judith Freund is Director of the Department of Nuclear Medicine and Bone Densitometry at St Vincent's Hospital, Darlinghurst, as well as being actively involved in osteoporosis and body composition research.

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Osteoporosis

Prevention & Diagnosis.

Your Questions Answered

What is osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis is a ‘thinning of bones’ which become more fragile and likely to break. The hip, spine and wrist are commonly effected. Osteoporosis is a common condition and will affect approximately two out of three women, and one out of three men, as they get older.

What causes osteoporosis?

There are many risk factors for osteoporosis. Postmenopausal women in particular are at risk especially with early menopause. Certain medical conditions, or their treatments, also increase the risk of osteoporosis. Other risk factors include a family history of osteoporosis, and lifestyle factors.

Which lifestyle factors are important?

Regular exercise, adequate calcium in our diets and avoiding smoking or excess alcohol and caffeine, will decrease the risk of osteoporosis. Measures which lower the risk of falling are also important in preventing osteoporotic fractures.

Is a healthy lifestyle enough?

No! Osteoporosis can still occur with the healthiest of lifestyles.

How do I know if I have osteoporosis?

Often we don’t, since there are no symptoms of osteoporosis until a bone is broken (a fracture). Tests can then be done to determine the severity of the disease.

Can osteoporosis be diagnosed before a fracture occurs and does this help?

Yes. A number of effective treatmentsto increase bone strength are now available and the earlier therapy is started the better chance one has of preventing a fracture. Exercise programs to reduce the risk of falls, are also effective in preventing fractures.

How do I find out if I have osteoporosis?

The commonest test used is the DXA scan (Dual Energy X-ray) which measures bone density, a measure of bone strength. DXA scanners use very low dose X-rays and are considered the Gold Standard for the diagnosis of osteoporosis. A low DXA value is useful in estimating the future risk of breaking a bone. DXA scans are also valuable in monitoring treatment.
Osteoporosis can also be provisionally diagnosed if a middle aged or elderly person develops a broken bone (fracture) after minimal trauma. Once a person suffers one such fracture they are at much higher risk of suffering further fractures.

Do DXA scanners detect fractures?

The latest generation of DXA bone scanners can often detect unsuspected spine fractures using a special lateral (side) view of the spine (Lateral Vertebral Assessment).

What should I do?

If you are older than 50, particularly if you are female and have a family history of osteoporosis, you may benefit from an assessment of your bone density.
Lateral Vertebral Assessment may also be useful in overall assessment of fracture risk, particularly in those older than 60.