

Dr Jon LaPook (CBSnews medical correspondent): Eighty-year-old Mitch Hutsman has been living with osteoporosis for 20 years. It's caused fractures in her spine⁽¹⁾, ankle⁽²⁾, and wrists⁽³⁾.

Dr Felicia Cosman: Hey, Mrs Hutsman, how are you?

LaPook: She can't tolerate the current drugs taken monthly or weekly. These pills are not easy to take. To avoid severe heartburn⁽⁴⁾, patients must drink a full glass of water and stay upright⁽⁵⁾ for up to an hour.

Mitch: You know, I used to be tall!

LaPook: Mitch was eager⁽⁶⁾ to test a new drug called Zoledronic Acid or Reclast[®]. It's given intravenously and lasts for a year because it binds⁽⁷⁾ to the bone.

Mitch: It worked very well, but no side-effects whatsoever.

LaPook: A three-year study published today in the New England Journal of Medicine looked at over 7,700 women past menopause. Patients with osteoporosis taking Reclast[®] had a 70% decrease in spine fractures and a 41% reduction in hip fractures.

Dr Cosman: It is at least as effective if not more effective than the other drugs that are currently⁽⁸⁾ available for osteoporosis.

LaPook: Researchers also found slightly more than 1% of patients had a serious irregular heartbeat. Mitch says she's had no broken bones since taking the medication. Experts say reducing fractures can save lives.

Dr Steven Goldstein: 20% of women who fractured a hip would be dead within 12 months. 25% of women who fractured a hip would never live unassisted again.

Mitch: I have slipped⁽⁹⁾ a couple of times...no problems! So I'm keeping my fingers crossed.

Dr LaPook: The drug is already approved to treat bone cancer. The FDA (Food and Drug Administration) is expected to decide this fall⁽¹⁰⁾ whether to approve it for osteoporosis.

CBSnews.

Lexical helpline:

1. **the spine:** the vertebral column
2. **the ankle:** joint between the leg bones above, and the talus below
3. **the wrist:** joint situated between the arm bones above, and the hand below
4. **heartburn:** a burning sensation experienced in the region of the heart, caused by an excessive acidity of the gastric juice
5. **upright:** standing vertically, straight
6. **eager (to +V):** enthusiastic, excited
7. **bind to (v):** adhere to
8. **currently:** at the present time, now
9. **slip (v):** lose one's balance and footing
10. **fall:** autumn