

# ***COPING***

## **'A newsletter from COPN'**

April 11, 2008

*Remember: You can live well with osteoporosis!*

### *Thought for today:*

Your mind is a garden,  
Your thoughts are the seeds,  
The harvest can be  
Either flowers or weeds.

### *Gardening safely with osteoporosis: (Part 1)*

Now that spring is 'officially' here, many of us are longing to get out into the garden.

Love of gardening and the pleasure of pouring over garden books and seed catalogues has sustained many of us during the long, cold Canadian winter. For those of us with osteoporosis, we may feel that pain and fracture, or the fear of further problems will mean giving up our gardens. From England's National Osteoporosis Society newsletter come these hints that will help you continue to garden happily. In this issue we will discuss how to plan your garden. In the next issue we will give you practical gardening tips.

Don't give up. Be positive! You may need to rethink your garden. Take control. See this as a challenge for creating new ideas and a different approach to gardening.

### *Planning your osteoporosis-friendly garden:*

When planning changes to your garden, decide which tasks are difficult or painful. No single garden plan or way of gardening is right for everyone. You may decide to remove or change aspects of your garden. Possible ideas:

- Create narrow borders or beds that can be reached easily without back strain, or consider container gardening near your house. You can do this for vegetables or fruit trees. Take care with containers as they may be heavy even when empty.
- Raise beds so that bending forward is unnecessary, particularly if beds are narrow.
- Replace lawn with paving or longer meadow grasses.
- Choose ground cover or low maintenance herbaceous borders. (Choose plants that do not need staking or pruning.)

- Avoid fast growing hedges that will need constant pruning. Choose slower growing shrubs.
- Check the tools available from your local garden centre or speciality suppliers. Some tools have long handles with interchangeable ends. This will reduce the bending as well as reducing number of tools that need to be carried around the garden. Electric lawn mowers are preferable to gas lawn mowers.
- Use a child's wagon and pull your plants or tools around your garden.
- Plan somewhere in the garden to sit and rest, preferably near scented flowers or your favourite shade tree.
- Try not to create an obstacle course. Make sure there is clear access to all parts of the garden.
- Make sure paths are wide enough, especially if you use a walking aid.
- Ask for help with the bigger jobs like changing aspects of your garden. This might seem expensive or daunting at first but it is worth it in the long term. Get several quotes and ask around. You can rent gardening equipment but it may be less exhausting to pay someone else.

Apart from being an enjoyable activity, gardening can provide specific benefits for you. It can build confidence, be a rewarding form of exercise, create a sense of well being and fill your days with colour and pleasure. Have you ever noticed how often your neighbours stop to chat if you are in the garden? And don't forget all that vitamin D from sunshine.

*Funny Bone:*

I planted some birdseed. A bird came up. Now I don't know what to feed it.

**Remember:** It is important for you to eat a **healthy diet**, get some appropriate **exercise**, take your **calcium and vitamin D** and if your doctor has prescribed a **medication** don't forget to take it as directed.

**COPING WEEKLY** will come to you every second Friday. We hope you enjoy it and find the information useful. Don't forget to log on to [www.osteoporosis.ca](http://www.osteoporosis.ca) for up to date information.

The material contained in this newsletter is provided for general information only. It should not be relied on to suggest a course of treatment for a particular individual or as a substitute for consultation with qualified health professionals who are familiar with your individual medical needs. Should you have any health care related questions or concerns, you should contact your physician. You should never disregard medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have read in this or any newsletter.

# **COPING**

*'A newsletter from COPN'*

April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008

*Remember: You can live well with osteoporosis!*

## **Thought for today:**

Make new friends but keep the old  
The first are silver, the latter, gold.

## **Osteoporosis Report Card**

In 2008, Osteoporosis Canada is undertaking an exciting project to support advocacy for quality patient care across Canada. We are developing our first-ever **Osteoporosis Report Card** to present a province-by-province picture of access to Bone Mineral Density (BMD) testing and osteoporosis medications, as well as provincial government osteoporosis support and activities. The report card will be released during Osteoporosis Month in November.

The report card committee is currently working to gather, confirm and analyze information and statistics from the provincial governments, Statistics Canada and industry. However, this is only one part of the picture. We also want to tell the story of how osteoporosis affects the lives of those with the disease by profiling four to five individuals.

## **We need your help**

We need your suggestions of people to profile in the report. We're looking for representation from:

- men and women
- a range of ages
- various cultural backgrounds
- individuals from both urban (city or towns) and rural areas
- newly diagnosed individuals and those who have lived with the disease for several years
- individuals who can speak about how osteoporosis has affected their lives – health, daily life, work, leisure, sense of well-being, etc.

We are particularly interested in people who have:

- experienced challenges accessing a BMD (e.g., had to travel a long distance, had a long wait)
- had difficulty as a result of the government in their province not reimbursing the medications they needed for their osteoporosis. (for example, only one medication is listed for reimbursement and you aren't able to tolerate it or it isn't working for you.)

We're also interested in highlighting health care professionals who treat people with osteoporosis and who have spoken out for high quality osteoporosis care.

Would you be interested in telling your story or do you know someone who would?

You will need to be comfortable in sharing information about yourself publicly and speaking in front of groups of people, talking to the newspapers, radio and maybe even television. If selected, you will be interviewed over the telephone by our writer and will have the chance to review the final story before it goes to print.

If you would like to volunteer or know anyone whom you think would be a good subject for a profile send us an email. Tell us a little bit about yourself or the person you are recommending and why these stories are interesting. We won't be able to highlight every person suggested, but with your help we'll be able to find some strong personal stories that will help policy makers understand why osteoporosis deserves attention!

Please email your suggestions to our writer, Linda Huestis, [linda.huestis@sympatico.ca](mailto:linda.huestis@sympatico.ca) by **May 9th**.

Thank you for your help and stay tuned for more information on the **Osteoporosis Report Card** in the coming months.

*Funny Bone:*

All I ask is a chance to prove that money can't make me happy.

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