

COPING

‘A newsletter from COPN’

March 14th, 2008

Remember: You can live well with osteoporosis!

Thought for today: Patience is the ability to let your light shine after your fuse has blown. -- Washington Post

Q. Everyone tells me to be careful I don't fall. So easy to say but what steps should I take?

A. Individuals with fragile bones are much more likely to break a bone if they fall. If you have osteoporosis, you should become aware of the factors that will increase the likelihood of falling. Here is some advice to help prevent falls:

- Clear your home of anything that might cause a fall – scatter rugs, protruding furniture, cords that could trip you up.
- Pets like to stay close – be careful not to trip over your pet dog or cat.
- Wear low-heeled shoes that give good support. Avoid open back shoes that your foot might slide off. Take care of your feet. Painful feet may affect your ability to remain stable.
- Slippers are called that for a good reason. Be sure the slippers you wear around the house have some kind of grip on the soles. Avoid knitted slippers and ones with floppy heels.
- Keep stairs in good repair, with handrails on both sides, free of clutter and well lit.
- Ask a physiotherapist or occupational therapist to come to your home and advise you on how to reduce hazards that can lead to falls.
- Consider your medications (prescription, over-the-counter and herbal) and their potential side effects. Studies suggest that certain medications may increase the risk of falling. For example, high blood pressure medications may cause a sudden drop in blood pressure and fainting in some people. Other medications, such as sleep aids and antidepressants, may cause drowsiness or a decrease in alertness. If you are on a combination of medications, we suggest you discuss this issue with your doctor and/or pharmacist. Do not stop your medications without your physician's advice.
- Watch for uneven ground, sidewalks and floors.

- If you must go out on ice and are considering wearing ice grips on the soles of your boots, a word of caution: Always be very careful when selecting any product for traction on slippery – especially icy – surfaces. These surfaces present a hazard for any individual and no one should rely completely on an anti-slip device to protect them from a fall. As well, remember to remove the anti-slip product when entering a store or mall. They can be slippery on indoor - especially tile - surfaces. If you use a cane, put an ice pick on it. Keep your outside stairs and sidewalk clear of ice and snow.
- Stay physically active. Individually tailored exercise programs that include muscle strengthening, balance training and walking are effective in reducing falls.

Most large communities have falls prevention programs to help raise awareness of the factors that increase one's chances of falling. Call your local community information centre to access falls prevention resources.

Next Issue will contain some specific tips for preventing falls in the bathroom and kitchen.

Funny Bone:

Optimist: Someone who sets aside two hours to do his income-tax return. Pessimist: A person who expects nothing on a silver platter except tarnish.

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 Newsletter will come to you on a biweekly basis. We hope you enjoy it and find the information useful. Don't forget to log on to 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’

March 28th, 2008

Remember: You can live well with osteoporosis!

Thought for today: Forget injuries. Never forget a kindness – Confucius

As a follow up to last issue in response to the question about falls here are some specific tips for being safe in the bathroom and in the kitchen. These will all seem very logical when you read them but check around your house and see what hazards are there that you didn't even notice.

Preventing falls in the bathroom

- Grab bars are a proven way to make the bathroom safer. Grab bars need to be secured into wall studs, so get professional help.
- Rubber tub mats or adhesive strips can prevent disastrous falls in the tub.
- Floor mats should have rubber backings.
- If you find it hard getting in and out of the bath, or standing for any length of time under the shower, a bath chair or seat that fits across the bath and a hand-held shower will help.
- If it is difficult to sit down on and get up from the toilet, there are devices that will help, such as a riser for the seat or a frame with arm rests.
- Use a night light in the bathroom so you aren't fumbling around in the dark at night.
- A shower organizer will help organize all of your soaps, shampoos and other bath products so that they are in easy reach and you do not need to bend over.

Preventing falls in the kitchen

- Keep commonly used items within easy reach. This limits having to stoop very low or reach up high. A long-handled reacher, with rubber grips, helps with out-of-reach items.
- A step stool is a necessary item for every kitchen. Choose a sturdy one, preferably with a hand rail. Resist the temptation to climb up on chairs or tables - they definitely aren't designed for that purpose.

- Clean up spills immediately; they may cause you to slip and fall later if forgotten.

Funny Bone:

Did you hear about the worker in the orange-juice plant who was fired because he couldn't concentrate?

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 for up to date information.

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