

COPING
'A newsletter from COPN'
April 1, 2010

Remember: You can live well with osteoporosis!

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Thought for today:

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

Thank you, Marg MacDonell!

After 72 editions of COPING, Marg MacDonell is putting away her pen to move on to new challenges. For years Marg MacDonell has been the creative force behind the COPING - researching, writing and editing each and every one of COPN's newsletters. Her ability to craft the articles in a language we could all understand is uncanny. She has taught us, she has touched us and she has made us laugh.

Marg's importance to COPN, and to Osteoporosis Canada was recognized last year when she was presented the 2009 Eleanor Mills Inspiration Award. Then, as now, she is a role model who by embracing her osteoporosis inspires others with her dedication, determination and optimism. Although the COPN Executive Committee will not be the same without Marg, we can all take solace in the fact that she will continue to be an integral part of our osteoporosis family as she now turns her full attention to the Manitoba Chapter.

Please join all of here at Osteoporosis Canada in saying thank you to Marg for her inspirational leadership and in wishing her all the best in this new "chapter" of her osteoporosis journey.

We now know for sure that you can live well with osteoporosis – for Marg has shown us the way.

Gardening safely with osteoporosis:

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 specialty 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 favorite 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 neighbors stop to chat if you are in the garden? And don't forget all that vitamin D from sunshine.

Volunteer with Osteoporosis Canada!

Is your life in any way affected by osteoporosis?

Are you interested in representing people with osteoporosis?

We are a dynamic, growing network and we have many opportunities for you to join us:

- Steering committee members to provide leadership
- Writers/editors to help put out the e-newsletter *COPING*
- Web-savvy people to work on our web site and many more volunteer opportunities available.

To join our team please e-mail us at cPatientNetwork@osteoporosis.ca

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 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.

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