



Osteoporosis Canada

Ostéoporose Canada

COPING

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Remember: You can live well with osteoporosis!

A Gentleman Always Helps

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FRACTURE FACT:

At least one in three women and one in five men will suffer a broken bone from osteoporosis during their lifetime.

“You are a big, strong man. You should help her!” What simple statements, but what a trigger for a flood of emotions. I was in the audience of 40 individuals who had just enjoyed a great presentation on the osteoporosis care gap. We were all preparing to leave when a lady asked aloud for assistance to get up from her chair to use her walker. I was one of the only two or three men in the room so it was not surprising that the woman beside me suggested that I be the one to help. After all, my amply upholstered frame, my rugged if not youthful looks and an ability to get around without assistance all hide the fact that I too have osteoporosis and have fractured many bones. So why did I jump to my feet and go over and help her instead of admitting that I should not help? Shouldn't I know better than to put myself at risk of another fracture?

The answer to the latter question is simple. Of course I know better. I've spent more than a decade learning all I can about the things I can do to improve my bone health and reduce the risk of breaking another bone.

So why did I do it even though I know better? The answer to this question is a little more complicated as it involves a web of emotions and stereotypes. Let me explain from my own unscientific and somewhat biased point of view.

Flattery works on men. Tell me I am big and strong and of course I will help. To say “no” would imply that I am not so big and strong. (We know that *sometimes* it's a trick you women play on us, but we can't resist.)

A gentleman always helps, even when there might be some personal risk involved. I am mindful of this maxim I learned from my mother whenever I see someone – especially a lady – in need.

A closely related issue is our (perhaps misplaced) **sense of pride**. At times we men may be too proud to admit we are unable to help or need help ourselves, so we take unnecessary risks. Whether it's lifting the too heavy bag off the luggage carousel at the airport, or putting a bag of compost into the trunk of a car at the garden centre, I admit I have not always erred on the side of caution.

We are **too embarrassed** to decline a request to help. Heck, we are even too embarrassed to admit that we have osteoporosis in the first place. Even though we have seen the evidence – for Pete’s sake one in five men will suffer an osteoporotic fracture – we still secretly harbour the stereotypical view that osteoporosis is a woman’s disease.

Men are strong and women are weak. Of course this is also a generalization, but how often do we expect a man to do a job when a women could do it just as well?

Fortunately, though, my rational side most often wins and I am able to avoid the spontaneous, emotional reactions and make decisions that eliminate the risk, yet get the job done. I am happy to share with you some of the advice I give myself when one of those potentially risky situations arise.

Think before you act. Remind yourself of your limitations. There is a safe, and an unsafe, way to lift and move even the smallest of articles. You will never forget that you have osteoporosis, but you may become complacent and take more chances, especially as you go longer without fracturing another bone.

Ask for assistance when you need it. Even though we may look like we don’t need any help, few will refuse when asked. I might say, “Excuse me, would you be able to lend me a hand? I have bad bones and I am unable to lift heavy objects on my own.” As a bonus, this sometimes opens the door to a conversation about men and osteoporosis.

Cherish and acknowledge those who do offer to help. Friends, family, work colleagues and even complete strangers will come to your aid. Don’t take them for granted and always, always thank them.

Consider alternative ways to help without doing the heavy lifting yourself. I might say, “I would love to help you but I am unable to lift. Let me find someone who can.” When the situation warrants, I stay with the individual until help does arrive, allowing me to use the interlude to talk about men and osteoporosis.

Like hundreds of thousands of other Canadian men, I have osteoporosis. I’ve known this since 1998. It took eight years before I publicly acknowledged the fact, and even nine years further on I still sometimes hesitate before admitting that I have osteoporosis and acting accordingly. My rational side tells me this is unwise, but my not-so-rational side celebrates the fact that I took another chance, and I got away with it. Hey, I *am* a man after all!

Epilogue: It turned out that the lady didn’t need help getting to her feet. She just wanted someone to stabilize her walker, something I was able to do without any personal risk, and without having to swallow my pride and admit that I was unable to help. I got away with another one.

With thanks to Larry Funnell, past chair of the COPN executive committee, for sharing his experience and insights.

You Make My Life Better!

There are times when someone is particularly helpful with small acts of kindness that make my life better, easier, or just more pleasant. At other times, someone goes out of their way with huge efforts to make my life better.

At those times, I wish I could let that person know that their action was thoughtful and much appreciated with more than just a verbal “thank you.”

“You Make My Life Better” is an award you can give to people who make your life better as you live well with osteoporosis. As members of COPN, you can nominate a person for such an award by filling out a simple nomination form. Once your nomination is received by the COPN office staff, your nominee will be sent a “You Make My Life Better” certificate on your behalf to congratulate him or her. A letter will accompany the certificate that will include your personal note that explains what they did that made your life better.

To access a nomination form, [click here](#). For those of you who receive the COPN newsletters by Canada Post, a nomination form will be included in your package of newsletters. You can fill out the nomination form and mail it to COPN c/o Osteoporosis Canada, #301 – 1090 Don Mills Road, Toronto ON M3C 3R6. The award process will be the same.



Moved? Changed phone number or e-mail address?

Let us know by calling 1-800-463-6842 or emailing copn@osteoporosis.ca and we'll update your information. This will ensure we keep you up to date!

How Does Calcium Affect Bone Health and Fracture Risk?

On September 29, 2015, two research articles were published online in the British Medical Journal (BMJ) concerning the effect of calcium intake on bone mineral density (BMD) and fracture reduction. These have been widely reported in the media. The full text of the Osteoporosis Canada response can be found on the website at <http://www.osteoporosis.ca/calcium-intake-and-effect-on-bone-health-and-fracture-risk-reduction/>

The following is a summary of the OC response.

The first study published in the BMJ summarizes the results of 59 earlier studies to evaluate the effects of calcium intake on BMD in people over the age of 50. According to this study, both extra dietary calcium intake and the use of calcium supplements were associated with small increases in BMD. A small reduction in fractures was observed with calcium supplementation. The authors concluded that calcium intake from dietary sources and supplements increase BMD similarly, but that this is unlikely to reduce fractures.

The second study explored whether calcium could reduce fractures. This study did not show a significant reduction in fracture risk in the large randomized trials with calcium supplementation.

The two studies significantly differed in both the numbers of people evaluated and in the quality of the assessments. They also differed in how fractures were identified. As a result, in order to better determine the effects of calcium supplementation on bone health, additional research is needed using well-designed, large, controlled studies.

Every cell in our body requires calcium in order to function normally. Inadequate calcium intake results in the release of calcium from our bones in order to meet our daily requirements. Because of this, Osteoporosis Canada continues to recommend 1000-1200 mg of calcium daily, preferably from dietary sources, and to use supplements only if this is not possible (in the form of calcium carbonate or calcium citrate). For more detailed information on Osteoporosis Canada's nutritional recommendations, please visit http://www.osteoporosis.ca/wp-content/uploads/OC_Nutrition_October_2012.pdf.

However, in individuals with osteoporosis or high fracture risk, there is no research evidence supporting the use of calcium supplements *alone* as a treatment to prevent fractures. Such individuals may require medication in addition to adequate calcium intake and vitamin D supplementation in order to reduce their fracture risk. For more information on drug treatments for osteoporosis please visit http://www.osteoporosis.ca/wp-content/uploads/Drug_Treatments_September_2013_EN.pdf.

If you have questions about this article or any other aspect of osteoporosis, please call toll-free 1-800-463-6842 (416-696-2663 in the Greater Toronto Area) to speak to an information counsellor.

FUNNY BONE:

“If you think women are the weaker sex, try pulling the blankets back to your side of the bed.”

Beyond the Break: Special Presentation for World Osteoporosis Day

Osteoporosis and Nutrition

Role of Vitamin D in Nutrition, Bone Health and Osteoporosis

Date: October 20, 2015

Time: 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm EDT

TSM# 48377241

Speakers: Dr. Hope Weiler RD, PhD, McGill University – Associate Professor Nutrition, Development and Aging; Shelly Hagen RD, NCMP Health Educator Women’s Wellness Program – Covenant Health Services Grey Nuns Community Hospital

Please register at <http://www.osteoporosis.ca/health-care-professionals/beyond-the-break/>

A Recipe from our Sponsor

Buckwheat Shepherd’s Pie

Course: *Main Dishes*

Preparation Time: *40 mins*

Cooking Time: *1 hr*

Yields: *4 to 6 servings*

1/2 milk product serving(s) per person

Calcium: 25% DV/ 271 mg

Nutritious buckwheat is not often cooked whole. Its pronounced nutty flavour needs to be softened, as in this recipe that highlights the qualities of this excellent grain.



Ingredients

1 1/2 lb (675 g) potatoes, peeled
1/3 cup (80 mL) sour cream
1 1/2 cups (375 mL) **Canadian Monterey Jack**, grated
Salt and pepper, freshly ground
1 1/2 cups (375 mL) red onion, chopped finely
1 Container (200 g) crimini mushrooms, sliced
3 tbsp (45 mL) **Butter**

1/2 cup (125 mL) toasted buckwheat
2 tbsp (30 mL) fresh coriander, chopped
1 tbsp (15 mL) chipotle in adobo, chopped
1 cup (250 mL) canned, diced tomatoes
1 cup (250) vegetable stock
3 cups (750 mL) corn kernels

Preparation

Cook potatoes in salted water. Mash and set aside in a bowl. Add sour cream and cheese. Season with salt and pepper and mix well. Refrigerate.

Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).

In a large skillet, sweat onion and mushrooms in butter for 10 min without browning. Add buckwheat, coriander, chipotle, tomatoes and stock. Bring to a full boil, reduce the heat and simmer, uncovered, 6 min. Transfer to an 8-inch (20 cm) square baking dish. Top with corn kernels. With a fork, spread mashed potato evenly over the top.

Bake in the middle of the oven 40 min. Serve promptly.

Tips

Chipotle in adobo sauce can be found in jars or cans in the Mexican products section of major supermarkets. Chipotles are red jalapeño peppers that are smoked and dried and preserved in a sauce. In recipes, the peppers are usually drained and chopped before using.

For more information about this recipe:

<http://www.dairygoodness.ca/getenough/recipes/buckwheat-shepherd-s-pie>

This issue of COPING is sponsored by Dairy Farmers of Canada

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