



Osteoporosis Canada

Ostéoporose Canada

**COPING**

September 7, 2016

*Remember: You can live well with osteoporosis!*

# Stay Properly Informed but... Self-diagnose and Self-treat off the Web "at Your Peril"

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A few years ago, the Herman™ cartoon strip published a cartoon of a patient in a hospital bed, staring at his laptop, the doctor standing at his bedside consulting a clipboard. The caption (spoken by patient): "That's not what it says on the Internet." The Internet is a marvellous source of an extraordinary amount of information. Not all of it is scientifically sound, up to date or relevant to your particular situation. To remind us all of how to use the Internet effectively, we are reprinting this article originally published in Coping, June 18, 2014.

## Self-diagnose and self-treat off the Web "at your peril"

Do you use the Internet to search for information, particularly medical and health related information? Are you ever tempted to self-diagnose or even self-medicate because of something you have read on the Internet? This can be a very dangerous practice, as illustrated by the following example: A woman had self-diagnosed chronic fatigue syndrome after reading about it on the Internet. Without consulting her physician, she started self-medicating with oral steroids that she was able to purchase over the Internet. She developed cataracts and glaucoma in both eyes as a result of the steroid use. Clearly, self-diagnosis and self-medicating are risky and NOT recommended.

If you enter the word "osteoporosis" into Google, you will get 40 pages of sites, or about 10,600,000 results, in 0.20 seconds. These sites may be hosted by national osteoporosis organizations, government agencies, allied health professional associations, pharmaceutical companies, hospitals and clinics, special interest groups or companies trying to sell you a product under the guise of providing information. Sometimes it is not clear who is hosting the site.

In addition to these organizational websites, we now have personal blogs, Facebook,

### *Fracture Fact*

**No single  
cause for  
osteoporosis  
has been  
identified.**

Twitter and YouTube, where individuals can post their questions, responses to questions, their experiences, comments and opinions. There are even sites offering online self-diagnosis for medical conditions. The amount of electronic information available is overwhelming, frequently contradictory and very often wrong. How does one navigate through this jungle of information and filter out items that are not credible, scientifically accurate and appropriate?

To help determine the reliability of information you find on the web, ask yourself the following questions:

- 1) **Who runs the website?** Are they concerned about health and wellbeing; are they reputable? You can usually find this under the "About Us" section on the site (the heading may be different, so look for the section whose purpose is to tell you about the host organization).
- 2) **What is the purpose of the website?** Is it to provide information or to sell products and/or raise funds? Remember that anything that seems too good to be true probably is.
- 3) **What are the suffixes (endings) of the website names?** For instance, websites that are sponsored by the U.S. government end with ".gov"; universities end with ".edu"; not-for-profit organization end with ".org"; and Canadian sites end with ".ca" As an example, Health Canada's website is [www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca); Osteoporosis Canada's website is [www.osteoporosis.ca](http://www.osteoporosis.ca).
- 4) **Is the information current and evidence based?** Reliable websites are frequently reviewed and updated. Check the copyright date on the bottom of the home page and the publication date of the articles posted.
- 5) **Are the links to other websites also reputable?** If the answer is "yes", the information being shared is usually accurate and your privacy is being protected.

While COPN and Osteoporosis Canada recognize that the Internet can often be a valuable tool to gather information, no resource is better than your doctor. Because everyone is different and unique, personalized health care from your doctor who knows you best cannot compare with general information you get off the Internet. The Internet cannot have a confidential discussion with you and formulate an individual approach to your healthcare plan that is personally tailored to your unique needs – but your doctor can.

Even after gathering information from the Internet, ALWAYS discuss your health issues with your healthcare professional. It is important for you to receive up-to-date and scientifically sound information and advice from a professional who is trained to assess your individual needs, who knows your medical history, any other medical conditions you may have, and what medications you are taking. All of these factors are very important as each can impact on the other.

While information gathering is often encouraged, self-diagnosis and self-medication are NOT recommended. COPN wants to reassure you that the medical and scientific information on the web pages of Osteoporosis Canada and in *Coping* is checked for medical accuracy by Osteoporosis Canada staff and our Scientific Advisory Council.

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.

# OSTEOPOROSIS CANADA'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2016

Osteoporosis Canada will be hosting its annual general meeting (AGM) on Saturday, September 24, 2016 at 9:00 a.m. at the Chelsea Hotel, 33 Gerrard Street west, Toronto.

The annual general meeting (AGM) is hosted by the chair of Osteoporosis Canada's National Board of Directors. The other members of the Board also attend as well as the President and CEO of Osteoporosis Canada, members of OC's senior management team, the COPN Executive Committee members, and OC's Operations Advisory Council. All Osteoporosis Canada members in good standing are eligible to vote on motions. Members will receive an AGM information package in the mail and they can vote in person by attending the meeting or submit their proxy to Corona Steele at [csteele@osteoporosis.ca](mailto:csteele@osteoporosis.ca). The AGM is also open to the public.

Both the chair of the Board and OC's President and CEO will reflect on the accomplishments and challenges of the past year and present their vision of future priorities and directions for Osteoporosis Canada. Members will vote to accept the audited financial statements for 2015-2016 and to accept the nominations for new members of the Board. Osteoporosis Canada's Annual Report will be presented at the meeting and made available afterwards to all as a downloadable file on Osteoporosis Canada's website at [www.osteoporosis.ca](http://www.osteoporosis.ca).

In summary, the annual general meeting provides the organization the opportunity to confirm with its members that Osteoporosis Canada (and all of its components including COPN) is on the right track in meeting its mandate and serving its clients. An upcoming issue of COPING will report on the outcome of the AGM and the other events like OC's annual awards presentations that take place around it.

## FUNNY BONE:

A positive attitude may not solve all your problems, but it will annoy enough people to make it worth the effort. - Herm Albright

## A Recipe from our Sponsor

### Marinated Bocconcini, Mushroom and Tomato Salad

Course: *Salads*

Preparation Time: *20 mins*

Refrigeration Time: *1 hr 15 mins*

Yields: *4 servings*

*2/3 milk product serving(s) per person*

**Calcium:** 8% DV/ 90 mg

The marinade adds a punch of flavour to Bocconcini, mushrooms and tomatoes. Topping a bed of greens and a drizzle of a yogurt dressing with the marinated mixture adds zest to this starter or side salad.



## Ingredients

1 small clove garlic, minced  
3 tbsp (45 mL) balsamic vinegar  
1 tbsp (15 mL) olive oil  
1 tsp (5 mL) Dijon mustard  
Pinch salt  
Pepper  
1 cup (250 mL) sliced drained mini **Bocconcini cheese**  
8 oz (250 g) cremini or white mushrooms, trimmed and quartered  
1 cup (250 mL) grape tomatoes, cut in half  
2 tbsp (30 mL) chopped fresh basil  
6 cups (1.5 L) mixed salad greens (about 6 oz/175 g)  
1/4 cup (60 mL) **plain yogurt**  
1/8 tsp (0.5 mL) salt

## Tips

To make this a main course salad, add chopped hard-cooked egg or cooked chicken breast when assembling the salad.

To pack this salad for lunch, prepare through step 2, stirring the yogurt and salt into the marinated mixture, then pack the marinated mixture and greens separately to toss together just before serving.

For a more exotic flavour, add 1 tsp (5 mL) fennel seeds, a pinch of hot pepper flakes and a wide strip of lemon or orange zest to the marinade with the garlic.

## Preparation

In an airtight container or a bowl, whisk together garlic, vinegar, oil, Dijon mustard, salt and 1/4 tsp (1 mL) pepper. Add Bocconcini and mushrooms; stir to coat well. Cover and marinate in the refrigerator for at least 1 hour or for up to 1 day.

Add tomatoes and basil to Bocconcini mixture and let marinate in the refrigerator for at least 15 minutes or up to 4 hours.

To serve, arrange salad greens on serving plates. Using a slotted spoon, place Bocconcini mixture onto greens. Whisk yogurt and salt into remaining marinade and season with pepper to taste. Drizzle dressing over salad.

**For more information about this recipe:**

<http://www.dairygoodness.ca/getenough/recipes/marinated-bocconcini-mushroom-and-tomato-salad>

**This issue of COPING is sponsored by Dairy Farmers of Canada**

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These newsletters are not intended to replace individualized medical advice. Readers are advised to discuss their specific circumstances with their healthcare provider.



[getenough.ca](http://getenough.ca)