



Osteoporosis Canada

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COPING

'A newsletter from COPN'

August 19, 2011

Remember: You can live well with osteoporosis!

A Winning Personal Story

Do you remember the August 2009 issue of COPING? When a CARP Zoomer Osteoporosis Contest was published, inviting women to tell their stories of how they live well with osteoporosis, Wendy Croome, a COPN member from Ottawa, shared her story and was named the winner of the 'How Do You Fight Osteoporosis' Contest. Her contest win was highlighted in the winter 2009 edition of Zoomer Magazine and she received a \$5,000 garden makeover with Carson Arthur, host of TV's Green Force. In this article, Wendy shares her prize-winning story and tells us how her garden is doing one year after the makeover.

When I was diagnosed with osteoporosis in January of 2007, I was devastated. Did this mean that I was going to have to live quietly and in fear of fractures from now on? I also felt cheated because for the 10 years since menopause I had been taking calcium and Vitamin D faithfully. I also walked a lot and took part in exercise classes. How could I have osteoporosis?

My doctor prescribed a bisphosphonate to add to the dietary calcium and Vitamin D, and recommended that I do weight-bearing exercises. I discovered that walking is not considered the best exercise for bone building and that some of the exercises I was doing in the exercise class should not be performed by someone with osteoporosis. To make sure I did the best weight-bearing exercises for me, I found a personal trainer who works with people who have osteoporosis. Under her direction, I exercise at home using hand weights, exercise bands and a ball. I've improved my posture, muscle strength, balance and flexibility. I feel healthier and younger. Even my "bad back" of 40 years has all but disappeared.

In the summer of 2009, I enjoyed an amazing expedition cruise up the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador. Shore excursions were all made by Zodiac, which involved going down a steep gangway on the outside of the ship, stepping across to a bobbing inflatable boat, then sitting and bouncing on the inflated side as we zipped from ship to shore. Before the trip, I had been very nervous about that part, but after a ride or two, I found that I was loving it. My new-found balance, strength, and flexibility meant that I could comfortably handle the activity.

The garden makeover in 2010 was exciting in a very different way from the expedition cruise, as we watched Carson bring together wonderful new shrubs and perennials to give the

garden “pop”. My favourite part of this whole experience is that my improved strength and balance allow me to do things in the garden I never used to be able to do – from pruning my pear tree, to taking an old fence down, to changing the propane tank of the barbecue. I still have osteoporosis, but now, instead of living fearfully, I am living fully.

Congratulations to Wendy and thank you for sharing your story with us!

Have you shared your story?

Many of us have discovered that sharing our story with others can be a significant step along the journey to living well with osteoporosis. Larry Funnell, Chair of COPN, recalls what it meant to him: *“For eight years after being diagnosed I kept my story bottled up inside of me. Only my immediate family and a few close friends knew that my many fractures were related to osteoporosis. That first nerve-wracking public telling of my story to a room full of strangers came out with a flood of emotions and relief. But most importantly it immediately connected me with others who had shared similar experiences and it opened the door to the support that I have found through my involvement with COPN. For me, telling my story was a life-changing moment.”*

Not only does sharing your story help you, it helps others who have been struggling with some of the same challenges. Patient stories provide a cornerstone in our efforts to advocate for improvements to the care provided to individuals affected by osteoporosis.

Documents and presentations filled with compelling facts and figures are, of course, important, but decision-makers are always most moved by the personal stories of those who are living with the challenges of the disease.

We encourage you to tell your story – to your family, your friends, your colleagues, and yes, even to complete strangers. And please do share your story with us at COPN, either by email in a reply to this message, or in writing to COPN at Osteoporosis Canada, 1090 Don Mills Road, Suite 301, Toronto, ON M3C 3R6.

Funny Bone – Here’s a tongue twister for you...”Which wristwatches are Swiss wristwatches?”

Notices/references

i. Remember: It is important for you to eat a calcium rich diet (take calcium supplements only if necessary and after consulting with your doctor), get some appropriate exercise, take your vitamin D and if your doctor has prescribed a medication don’t forget to take it as directed.

ii. COPING Weekly will come to you every second Friday. We hope you enjoy it and find the information useful. Remember to log on to www.osteoporosis.ca for up-to-date information or call us toll-free at 1-800-463-6842 to speak with an information counsellor about your questions and concerns.

iii. 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 healthcare-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.

iv. To have your name removed from the COPN mailing list please contact us at the email below.

You must provide the first and last name for which you registered in order to be removed from this list.

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