

COPN: Proudly Celebrating our 10th Anniversary**You CAN Prevent Falls and the Injuries they Cause
Part 3 of 4****In this issue**

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Fracture

Fact: Younger people tend to fall forward whereas older people tend to fall backward or sideways. This means that younger people with osteoporosis are more likely to break a wrist, whereas older people with fragile bones are more likely to break a hip.

Reducing Indoor and Outdoor Fall Risks

Because they have more fragile bones, individuals with osteoporosis have a higher risk of breaking a bone during a fall than those without osteoporosis. Thus, in Canada, it has become a public health priority to develop improved strategies to prevent falls and fall-related injuries among seniors and those with osteoporosis. In Part 1 of this newsletter series we explained how various factors affect balance and can cause falls. Part 2 discussed how you can reduce your personal health risk of falling. In this issue we will examine some safety measures you can take to reduce your **indoor and outdoor risks** of falling in and around your home. Home safety assessments done by an occupational therapist have also been shown to effectively reduce falls.

Stairs and Steps

- Make sure your stairs are in good repair, have a non-skid surface and do not have any irregularities from top to bottom.
- Mark the front edge of all steps with contrasting coloured non-skid tape or paint, not just the top and bottom steps.
- Make sure that the stairs are well lit and that you have light switches at both the top and bottom of the staircase.
- Runner mats, carpeting or other floor coverings on your stairs should be well fastened.
- There should be solid handrails or banisters on both sides of the stairway. Make sure you always hold on to them when ascending or descending.
- Remove your reading glasses when you go up and down the stairs.
- Never rush up or down the stairs, as this is a major cause for falls.

Kitchen

- Never stand on counters, chairs or other pieces of furniture to reach high places.
- If you have good balance, use a stable step stool with a safety rail for reaching high places – otherwise ask for help.
- Place frequently used items in an easy-to-reach location with heavy items in lower cupboards.
- Keep a mop or towel on hand to wipe up any spills immediately to avoid slipping.

Bathroom

- Use a rubber bath or shower mat, or a non-slip surface in your tub or shower.

- Install grab bars by the toilet, bathtub and shower. Obtain the advice of an occupational or physical therapist on the correct type and placement of these devices.
- Use a bath seat so you can take a shower or bath sitting down.
- Keep an absorbent towel available to wipe up moisture or spills immediately.
- Have a night light on.

Bedroom

- A light switch near your bedroom entrance is ideal. However, if this is not available try a motion-sensitive or “clapper” device that automatically turns on the light.
- Make sure there is a clear path from your bed to the bathroom.
- Have a cordless phone near your bed.
- Have a lamp beside your bed. There are lamps that you can turn on just by touching them.
- Place night lights in the bedroom, hallways and bathroom in case you need to get up in the middle of the night.
- Sit on the edge of your bed for a minute before getting up. This will help reduce falls due to dizziness.

Living Areas

- Remove all throw rugs or scatter mats.
- If you must use mats, use those with flat edges and a non-skid backing. Make sure they are not in high traffic areas or at the top or bottom of stairs.
- Make sure you have non-slip surfaces on floors and stairs.
- Avoid floor wax or use the non-skid kind.
- Make sure all walking surfaces are clear of clutter, such as cords, newspapers, etc.
- Watch that your pets are not underfoot. Put a bell on their collars so you know where they are.
- Make sure all rooms, stairs and balconies are well lit with non-glare lighting.
- Remove raised door sills where possible.
- Store flashlights in easily accessible places in case of a power outage.

Exterior Home Areas

- Keep front steps and walkways in good repair and free of snow, ice and leaves.
- Keep your front entrance and walkways around the house well lit. Consider motion-sensitive lights for these areas.
- Put away trip hazards such as gardening tools, hoses and rakes when not in use.
- Make sure you have non-slip surfaces on stairs, balconies, porches and patios.

Public Areas

There are several actions you can take to reduce the risk of fall hazards in public areas. Make a note of any hazards and report them to the local authorities. This may be your local municipality, public health department or the owner or proprietor of a building used by the public, such as a store, bank, restaurant, etc.

If you have fallen or are afraid of falling, do not ignore it or put it down to “just being nervous” or “clumsy” or “in a rush.”

- Consult with your doctor for a “falls” check-up. Write down as many details as you can about the event (where and how you fell, etc.) or complete a fall risk assessment, such as the one found at <http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/prevention/fallprevention.html> - by clicking on “[Are you at risk of falling.](#)” This may help you and your doctor determine the cause of the fall and devise specific fall prevention strategies for you.
- Your pharmacist can also review your medications (including any non-prescription remedies, natural health products or foods) for side effects and interactions that may increase your risk of falling.
- You may also consider wearing a personal alarm device around your neck or on your wrist. This will allow you to call for immediate assistance, just by pressing a button in the event that you fall or get

hurt. Some devices actually contact the company automatically if you fall, without your having to push any buttons.

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Note: In the second part of our series on Falls, we mentioned that hip protectors can reduce the risk of hip fracture in the event of a fall. We would like to clarify that the research that demonstrated these benefits was only conducted in long-term care settings, such as nursing homes. More research will help us better understand the possible benefits of wearing hip protectors in other community settings.

This concludes Part 3 of our fall prevention series. In Part 4, we will discuss exercises that can improve balance and help you reduce your risk of falls, so stay tuned!

FREE EVENT!

What YOU need to know about Osteoporosis

YOU CAN PREVENT FALLS AND THE INJURIES THEY CAUSE

DATE Wednesday, April 2, 2014
TIME 1:30-2:30 pm ET, 10:30-1:30 pm PT

PRESENTER
Dr. Vicky Scott - Senior Advisor on Fall and Injury Prevention, BC Injury Research and Prevention Unit and Ministry of Health

Watch live and archive with Ask a Question feature from your computer!

HOW TO REGISTER?
Click here or call 1-800-463-6842 ext. 2224

For more information on Osteoporosis Canada and the Canadian Osteoporosis Patient Network (COPN) call 1-800-463-6842 or visit our website at www.osteoporosis.ca

What YOU need to know about Osteoporosis - Virtual Forum for Osteoporosis Patients

YOU CAN PREVENT FALLS AND THE INJURIES THEY CAUSE

DATE Wednesday, April 2, 2014

TIME

PDT 10:30 – 11:30 am
MDT 11:30 – 12:00 pm
CDT 12:30 – 1:30 pm
EDT 1:30 - 2:30 pm
ADT 2:30 -3:30 pm

PRESENTER

Dr. Vicky Scott – Senior Advisor on Fall and Injury Research and Prevention Unit and Ministry of Health

Watch live and archive with Ask a Question feature from your computer!

Register now and you'll receive all the information you need to view the webcast. We encourage you to forward this information to patients and caregivers that may be interested in participating the upcoming session. You can find more information by visiting the web page at <http://www.osteoporosis.ca/osteoporosis-and-you/copn/virtual-forum/>

FUNNY BONE: The shinbone is a device for finding furniture in a dark room

LET'S GET SOCIAL!

HELP US GROW OUR COMMUNITY.

CONNECT WITH US...  

As Osteoporosis Canada continues to raise funds and move forward in its mission and vision to engage, educate and advocate for bone health and the risk reduction and treatment of osteoporosis and broken bones, we ask that our supporters help us expand the reach of our non-profit organization.

With 2 million Canadians affected by this disease, we want to make sure to get the word out to as many people as possible, as often as possible, and we need your help!

In addition to providing information on our website, through newsletters, public events and in traditional media forms, we have also been concentrating our efforts behind social media, specifically Facebook and Twitter. With the explosion of online sites such as these in the past 10 years, not only is this a new way to communicate and engage the public, it is also a new way that people are choosing to receive their communications from us.

If you have a Facebook or Twitter account, please “like” us or “follow” us for updates and other information.

If you are not on any of these sites, here is some information on why you may want to sign up.

The role of social media is to carry the information of the Osteoporosis Canada website further. Information that is posted in a detailed manner can be repurposed on a Facebook post to be “shared” or “liked” with a comment or to have the message condensed and “tweeted” in 140 characters on Twitter.

Here are some benefits of social media:

1. Social Media is free! What a great way to keep in touch at no cost.
2. It Can Keep Families Close. When family members live far apart, this can be a great way to connect, share photos and have more frequent conversations regarding everyday activities.
3. Community Belonging. Social media is a great way to stay in touch, discuss ideas and exchange tips between those who share the same interests. Those who have mobility challenges or difficulty getting out and about can now stay connected with greater ease.
4. Following a worthy cause like Osteoporosis Canada engages individuals with a community of like-minded individuals who share the same interests. You will receive current information in real time on health fairs, forums and information as it becomes available. This also provides the opportunity to comment, ask questions, or share tips and experiences, with your virtual community.

Social media is a great way to stay connected, but as with anything made public, you should be wary about how much personal information you post. For tips on being secure online, read more from Stay Safe Online: <http://www.staysafeonline.org/stay-safe-online/protect-your-personal-information/social-networks#sthash.FEwRVDlf.dpuf>

Osteoporosis Canada is targeting 5,000 Facebook likes and 1,000 Twitter followers and we are asking that you connect with us to help make this happen!

Here is how to connect with Osteoporosis Canada:



Visit our Twitter site <https://twitter.com/OsteoporosisCA> or Twitter handle @OsteoporosisCA



Visit our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/osteoporosiscanada>

A Recipe from our Sponsor

Irish stew with Havarti

Course: *Main Dishes*

Preparation Time: *20 mins*

Cooking Time: *2 hrs 15 mins*

Yields: *6 to 8 servings*

1/2 milk product serving(s) per person



For more information about this recipe:

<http://www.dairygoodness.ca/getenough/recipes/irish-stew-with-havarti>

Ingredients

2 tbsp (30 mL) butter
2 lb (900 g) stewing beef cubes
1 large leek, thinly sliced
4 cloves garlic
4 cups (1 L) different coloured carrots, peeled and cut into 1" (2.5 cm) pieces
2 cups (500 mL) parsnips, peeled and cut into 1" (2.5 cm) pieces
2 cups (500 mL) rutabaga, cut into 1" (2.5 cm) cubes
1 bottle (341 mL) dark beer
2 cups (500 mL) low-sodium beef broth
2 cups (500 mL) water
4 - 5 sprigs of fresh thyme
Salt and freshly ground pepper
7 oz (210 g) **Canadian Havarti**, finely diced
1 1/2 tbsp (25 mL) cornstarch

Preparation

In a large saucepan over high heat, melt butter and brown beef cubes. Add vegetables and cook 3–4 minutes, stirring constantly. Pour in beer, broth and water. Bring to a boil. Add sprigs of thyme and season with salt and pepper.

Cover and cook on medium-low heat for 2 hours or until meat is tender.

Coat Havarti with cornstarch and add to stew to make it thick and creamy. Remove sprigs of thyme, adjust seasoning and serve.

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.



NUTRITION
DAIRY FARMERS OF CANADA



getenough.ca

COPING is brought to you by the Canadian Osteoporosis Patient Network (COPN) every second Friday
www.osteoporosis.ca/copn . 1-800-463-6842 . copn@osteoporosis.ca