

## Remember: You can live well with osteoporosis! Standing Tall

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### \*SAVE THE DATE\*

September 26, 2012  
Virtual Education Forum on Osteoporosis Medications and Treatment

*Height loss can be an indication that you have had an undetected spine fracture, which is a broken bone in your back. Two thirds of these fractures are painless and 80% go untreated. That fracture may be the first sign that you have osteoporosis. Therefore, Osteoporosis Canada is launching a program this fall called Standing Tall. The objectives of this program are to:*

- *raise awareness that height loss can be an indicator of a spine fracture*
- *encourage people who know or suspect they have lost height to see their doctor.*

*A height screening program will be run at health fairs and other similar public events by Chapter volunteers. Using a stadiometer (a simple device to measure height), volunteers will measure and record the participant's height. If the height loss is in the range identified by the Osteoporosis Canada 2010 clinical practice guidelines for the diagnosis and management of osteoporosis (see below), the volunteer will recommend that the participant see their healthcare provider to be assessed for a possible undetected spinal fracture and underlying osteoporosis. To provide you with more information about the importance of height loss, we are reprinting this article from the June 10, 2011 issue of COPING.*

### Are You Shrinking?

It is normal to lose a *little* height as we get older – but *too much* height loss can mean that osteoporosis is causing bones to break in your spine which is making you become shorter. This type of height loss is **NOT** normal. So how can you tell the difference between normal height loss and height loss due to osteoporosis?

### Measure Your Height

Everyone over 50 years of age should have a height measurement annually. **For those age 50 and over, measuring how tall you are once every year can allow you to keep track of height change.** It is best to **ask** a health care provider (usually a nurse, physiotherapist, bone density technologist or doctor) to **measure** and **record** your height for you professionally, rather than you doing it yourself. This provides the most accurate measurements.

### Keep Track of Your Height

1. When I was a **young adult**, was \_\_\_\_\_ tall
2. I had a more **recent** professionally measured height at the age of \_\_\_\_ and I was \_\_\_\_\_ tall

3. **Today**, I am \_\_\_ years old and my professionally measured height is \_\_\_\_\_ tall
4. Height loss since a **recent** measurement =  
(2) - (3) = \_\_\_\_\_  
See below if you have lost 2 cm (3/4 of an inch) or more.
5. Height loss since **young adult** = (1) - (3) = \_\_\_\_\_  
See below if you have lost 6 cm (2 ½ inches)  
or more.

### Warning Signs of a Possible Spine Fracture

If you have lost 2 cm or more (¾ of an inch) in height, as measured by your healthcare provider, you may have a spine fracture.

If you have lost 6 cm or more (2½ inches) in height since you were a young adult, again, you may have a spine fracture.

Spine fractures are not the only reason people may lose height. Other causes of height loss include poor posture or arthritis. However, if you have lost height then you do need to be checked for the possibility of a broken bone in your back. Bone density tests are not designed to show bone fractures. To diagnose a bone fracture, what is needed is a regular X-ray of the thoracic and lumbar spine (the upper back and the lower back). Two thirds of spine fractures are painless so you may have had a spine fracture and not even know it. The only warning sign may be your loss of height. Talk to your doctor if you think you have lost some height.

*Acknowledgement: This article – Are you shrinking? - comes to us courtesy of the Dartmouth Osteoporosis Multidisciplinary Education (DOME) Program. DOME offers information on osteoporosis for anyone living in Nova Scotia via the Nova Scotia Telehealth system (available at all Nova Scotia Hospitals). If you live in Nova Scotia and would like to find out more about this excellent program, please contact Natalie Morris at (902) 465-8303.*

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**FRACTURE FACT:** Building strong bones during childhood and adolescence can be the best defense against developing osteoporosis later.

### FUNNY BONE:

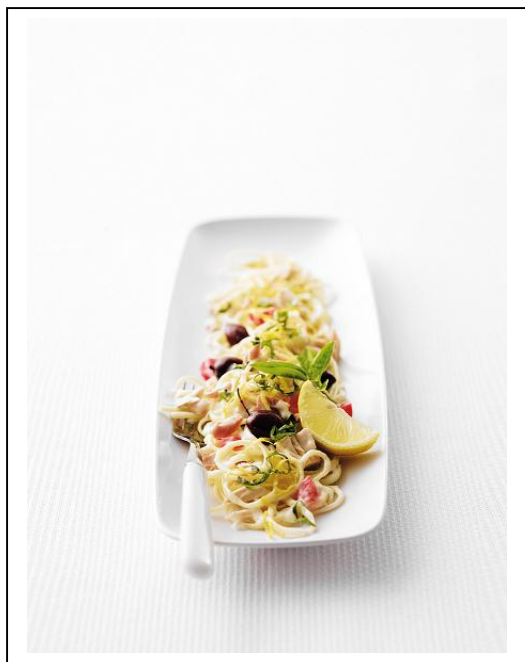
These days Happy Hour is a nap.

# A Recipe from Our Sponsor – Fettuccine with Tuna and Fresh Tomatoes

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Fast, easy and fresh-tasting are the hallmarks of this pasta dish. Made with on-hand ingredients, it's perfect for a family meal on a busy evening.

**Course:** *Main Dishes*      **Prep. Time:** 10-15 mins  
**Cooking Time:** 10 mins      **Yields:** 4 servings  
1/2 milk product serving(s) per person



## Ingredients:

12 oz (375 g) fettuccine or other long pasta  
1 tbsp (15 ml) **butter**  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
1/2 tsp (2 ml) each, dried basil and thyme  
Pinch hot pepper flakes (or to taste)  
Salt  
2 tbsp (30 ml) all-purpose flour  
2 cups (500 ml) **milk**  
Grated zest of 1 lemon  
2 cans (each about 6 oz / 170 g) light tuna, drained  
4 small plum tomatoes, chopped  
2 tbsp (30 ml) freshly squeezed lemon juice  
1/4 cup (50 ml) whole or chopped black or green olives (optional)  
1/4 cup (50 ml) chopped fresh basil

## Directions

In a large pot of boiling, salted water, cook fettuccine for 10 min or according to package directions, until tender; drain well.

Meanwhile, in a saucepan, melt **butter** over medium-low heat. Add garlic, dried basil and thyme, hot pepper flakes and 1/2 tsp (2 mL) salt; sauté for 1 min or until softened. Whisk flour into **milk** and stir into saucepan with lemon zest. Increase heat to medium and bring to a boil, whisking constantly for 2 to 3 min, or until sauce is thickened. Stir in tuna and tomatoes and heat through. Remove from heat; stir in lemon juice and season to taste with salt.

Divide pasta among shallow serving bowls and spoon sauce over top; sprinkle with olives (if using) and fresh basil.

## Tips

Look for Italian tuna packed in olive oil for a deeper tuna flavour.

**For the Adventurous:** Replace tuna with 4 oz (125 g) chopped smoked salmon and add 1 tsp (5 mL) crushed pink or green peppercorns with garlic or 2 tbsp (30 mL) drained capers with tomatoes.

For more information about this recipe:

<http://www.dairygoodness.ca/getenough/recipes/fettuccine-with-tuna-and-fresh-tomatoes>

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## Calcitonin in the News

Calcitonin is a hormone found naturally in our bodies. A synthetic form of calcitonin (Miacalcin NS® or generic calcitonin) is used in a nasal spray. It slows bone loss by decreasing the function of the osteoclasts (cells that eat away old bone) and can decrease the risk of spine fractures. It has also been found to be helpful in decreasing bone pain after a spine fracture. Calcitonin is also approved for the treatment of Paget's bone disease as well as for the treatment of high blood calcium in those with cancer. Recently, the European Medicines Agency (EMA) reviewed the benefits and risks of taking this medication and noted that a small increased risk of cancer has been seen with long term use of calcitonin. The EMA reviewed all available information including safety data following release of the drug on the market as well as information from experimental cancer studies. A 2.4% increased rate of cancer was seen in those taking nasal calcitonin long term. The concern regarding cancer risk did not appear to be present with short term use (months). At this time the increased risk of cancer has not been confirmed to be caused by calcitonin and may simply be an association.

Calcitonin does not have a very potent anti-osteoporosis effect, and does not decrease the risk of hip or nonspine fractures. For this reason, Osteoporosis Canada recommends that it not be used as a first line treatment for osteoporosis.

**BOTTOM LINE:** If calcitonin nasal spray was prescribed for you to take for a few months to control the pain of a vertebral fracture (broken bone in your back), don't stop taking it without checking with your doctor first. However, if you are taking calcitonin regularly for the general treatment of osteoporosis, ask your doctor about alternative first line drug therapies that you can take more safely on a long term basis.

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