



Women's Mid-Life Health Centre of Saskatchewan

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Health Issues



Osteoporosis:

Osteoporosis Canada's definition:

"Osteoporosis is a disease characterized by low bone mass and deterioration of bone tissue. This leads to increased bone fragility and risk of fracture (broken bones), particularly of the hip, spine and wrist. Osteoporosis is often known as "the silent thief" because bone loss occurs without symptoms. Osteoporosis is sometimes confused with osteoarthritis, because the names are similar. Osteoporosis is a bone disease; osteoarthritis is a disease of the joints and surrounding tissue".

Sadly, for many people, the first sign they have osteoporosis is when they break a bone. By this time the disease is fairly advanced. Eighty percent (80%) of all fractures in people over the age of 60 are osteoporosis related. If you have had a fracture from a minor mishap, ask your doctor to assess your risk factors for osteoporosis. Preventing second and subsequent fractures is extremely important for your quality of life.

There is no one cause of osteoporosis. Risk factors increase your chances of developing the disease. The most important risk factor is age (65 years and over) and family history of osteoporosis. However, younger people can have bone loss as well. Other significant risk factors include: a fracture with minimal trauma after the age of 40; spine compression fracture; family history of fracture, especially mother with hip fracture.

You can live well with osteoporosis. Up-to-date information and support is very important to help you to keep the bone you have and improve it. Preventing broken bones is the key to a good quality of life. One excellent source of current information is the Canadian Osteoporosis Patient Network (COPN) is a web-based network of people living with osteoporosis. Membership in this group provides a wealth of practical information through bi-weekly e-newsletters. Several times each year an on-line public forum features a relevant topic. Speakers from across Canada provide evidence-based current information. It is like going to a public presentation but you don't have to leave the house!

To sign-up for COPN, check out the Osteoporosis Canada website www.osteoporosis.ca, phone them at 1-800-463-6842, or contact them through your local Chapter office.

Osteoporosis Canada's website www.osteoporosis.ca is an excellent web resource of information about prevention and management of osteoporosis.

Other web resources:

National Osteoporosis Foundation www.nof.org
International Osteoporosis Foundation www.iofbonehealth.org

Support

Inform

Inspire