

Live Healthy Georgia – Seniors Taking Charge!



May 2007 Newsletter

May Is National Osteoporosis Awareness and Prevention Month!

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Have you ever thought back to your childhood and remembered roller skating or jumping rope with friends in the summertime, drinking tall glasses of milk with cookies, and eating melty ice-cream?

Did you ever think that even in those days, your bones were storing up minerals from nutritious foods and growing stronger with physical activity to prepare for the decline in bone mass that comes with aging? Maybe you didn't think about it then, but now you may be wondering what you can do to help slow down bone loss and lower your risk of fractures that is so common for older adults.



May is National Osteoporosis Awareness and Prevention Month, so it's a good time to think about our bone health and what we're doing to take care of them. Osteoporosis can result when bones lose minerals like calcium. This bone disease can cause

bones to become fragile and they may break easily. Osteoporosis is a "silent" disease because people often do not realize they have it until they break a bone.

Osteoporosis affects both men and women of all ethnicities, especially those over age 50. In fact, about 10 million Americans have osteoporosis, with 34 million more being at high risk because of low bone mass. The National Osteoporosis Foundation reports that one in two women and one in four men over age 50 will have an osteoporosis-related fracture in their remaining lifetime.



Certain characteristics and lifestyles put some people at higher risk than others for osteoporosis and low bone mass. These include being thin or having a small frame, a physically inactive lifestyle, vitamin D deficiency, chronic low calcium intake, current cigarette smoking, and

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personal history of fracture after age 50, to name a few.

While we can't control things like age or family history, there are several ways that we can keep our bones strong. Read the short story about "Mrs. Skelton" below. Notice the many "bone-healthy" habits she practices during her day to prevent falls and to keep her bones strong.



Mrs. Skelton woke up one Saturday morning and started her day by lacing up her tennis shoes.

It was a beautiful morning, so she and her husband, Mr. Skelton, went for a brisk, half-hour walk (*be physically active*) to start the day. After they returned home, Mrs. Skelton showered, enjoying the warmth of her fuzzy non-skid mat as she got out of the shower (*make your home safe*) and put on her clothes and shoes (*wear your shoes all the time*).

After their walk, Mr. and Mrs. Skelton had worked up quite an appetite, so it was time for a nutritious breakfast. Whole grain cereal with almonds and milk, and a small cup of calcium-fortified orange juice (*eat a balanced diet with calcium-rich foods*) fit the bill nicely.

Later that morning, Mrs. Skelton did chores around the house, picking up toys left on the floor (*prevent trips*) from her grandchildren's visit the day before, and pulling up weeds (*be physically active*) around the pansies outside. Before she knew it, morning was gone and her stomach began to growl. She looked in the refrigerator, which was a bit empty. But she found a few strawberries, some yogurt, and a little bit of milk. Mrs. Skelton decided she could whip up a yogurt smoothie (*eat a balanced diet with calcium-rich foods*) along with a sandwich to hold her over until dinner time.



After a trip to the grocery store, Mrs. Skelton unloaded all the heavy bags (*do strengthening and balance exercises*) to refill the fridge. She prepared a delicious evening meal of salmon with steamed broccoli, topped with shredded cheese (*eat a balanced diet with calcium-rich foods*), Mr. Skelton's favorite. It was the perfect end to an active day.

For more information on how to protect your bones, including getting a bone mineral density test, visit the National Osteoporosis Foundation at: <http://www.nof.org>.