

## COPN NEWSLETTER

Questions and Answers:

**Q: I have been practicing yoga for about a year now, but I've just learned that I have osteoporosis. Do I have to stop doing yoga? Or are there just particular movements I should avoid? What about yoga for my 30-year-old daughter? Is yoga a good preventive exercise against developing osteoporosis?**

**A:** Yoga is an excellent form of exercise that improves balance, posture, flexibility and strength. It also promotes relaxation and good breathing patterns

If you have severe osteoporosis with spinal fractures, you should consult your physician and a physiotherapist for advice on how to modify some of the exercises to reduce your risk of further fractures. Spinal loading, in a forward flexed position, should be avoided. There is no specific scientific evidence either for, or against, yoga for people with established osteoporosis. In my experience, however, the people with osteoporosis, even those with spinal fractures, who perform yoga regularly, have better balance and posture than those who do not. This will reduce your risk of falling and fracturing.

Yoga would be an excellent practice for your 30-year-old daughter to adopt in conjunction with weight-bearing aerobic exercise.

T'ai chi is another excellent form of exercise which people of all ages can enjoy and is safe for people with osteoporosis. It promotes flexibility and balance, and there is scientific evidence demonstrating its effectiveness in reducing the risk of falls in older adults. Many seniors' centres are now offering t'ai chi programs. When choosing a t'ai chi program it is important to ask about the content and the qualifications of the instructor to ensure that the exercises are actually t'ai chi forms.

There are several excellent exercise resources available from Osteoporosis Canada: BoneSmart video; Be Taller, Stronger, Longer booklet; Body Basics for Bones (book) and The Osteoporosis Book. Call 1-800-463-6842 for prices and other information or visit the web site at [www.osteoporosis.ca](http://www.osteoporosis.ca).

- Darien Lazowski-Fraher, PhD, PT, Adjunct Professor,  
The Centre for Activity and Ageing,  
University of Western Ontario.

Funny Bone: About the only thing that comes to us without effort is old age.

**Remember:** You can live well with osteoporosis!

It is important for you to eat a **healthy diet**, get some appropriate **exercise**, take your **calcium and vitamin D** and if your doctor has prescribed a **medication** don't forget to take it as directed.

COPN Newsletter will come to you every second Friday. We hope you enjoy it and find the information useful. If you have a question or a topic you would like addressed just E-mail us at [copn@osteoporosis.ca](mailto:copn@osteoporosis.ca).

Information contained in COPN Newsletter is not intended to replace medical advice. Please discuss your individual circumstances with your physician.

## COPN NEWSLETTER: APRIL 27, 2007

Remember: You can live well with osteoporosis! It is important for you to continue with a program of a healthy diet, appropriate exercise/activity, calcium and vitamin D and/or prescription drugs as directed by your physician. If you do have a prescription, follow the directions.

### Questions and Answers:

**Q.** My son, who is 10 years old, does not eat dairy products – with the exception of ice cream and milkshakes! I give him a multivitamin with calcium. He is young, but I worry about his bones when he gets older.

**A.** You are wise to be concerned. Osteoporosis is sometimes referred to as a disease of the young that manifests itself in old age. It is very important that youngsters build up their bone mass before puberty (boys reach their peak bone mass by about age 20). Young people ages 9 to 18 require 1300 mg of calcium per day. Check the multivitamin to see how much elemental calcium it provides: it likely provides vitamin D, but not very much calcium.

Ice cream and milkshakes are good sources of calcium, but you may be concerned about sugar and fat content. Low-fat ice cream and skim milk would be good alternatives. There is also calcium-fortified orange juice. One glass will provide as much calcium as a glass of milk. And don't forget vitamin D, which is necessary to help absorb the calcium. Your son requires 200 IUs per day.

The other thing to do is to encourage your son to have a physically active life. Weight-bearing exercise (walking, running, soccer, and racquet sports – any activity where you carry your own body weight) is critical to building bone mass. Don't let your son be a couch potato!

Reviewed by Susan Whiting PhD,  
Professor, College of Pharmacy & Nutrition,  
University of Saskatchewan.

Funny Bone: I enjoyed these so decided to share them with you over the next couple of newsletters.

Now that I'm 'older' (but refuse to grow up), here's what I've discovered:

- ~ I started out with nothing, and I still have most of it.
- ~ My wild oats have turned into prunes and All Bran.
- ~ I finally got my head together; now my body is falling apart.
- ~ Funny, I don't remember being absent minded...
- ~ All reports are in; life is now officially unfair.
- ~ If all is not lost, where is it?

**Remember:** It is important for you to eat a **healthy diet**, get some appropriate **exercise**, take your **calcium and vitamin D**, and if your doctor has prescribed a **medication** don't forget to take it as directed.

The COPN Newsletter will come to you biweekly. We hope you enjoy it and find the information useful. In the next few issues we will be running a series of questions and answers. COPN would like to know what is going on in your area that would be of interest to people living with osteoporosis. E-mail us at [copn@osteoporosis.ca](mailto:copn@osteoporosis.ca).

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Please discuss your individual circumstances with your physician.