



Valley Regional Hospital

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Osteoporosis...the silent bone thinning disease.

SHHHHH!! Do you hear anything? Osteoporosis is known as the silent disease. This bone thinning disease has no symptoms until debilitating fractures occur. Have you had a bone density test? Do you know the difference between Osteoporosis and Osteopenia? Are you or your children at risk?

Did you know that all across the country – and in our own community – nearly one in two women and one in four men aged 50 and older are at risk for osteoporosis? This bone-thinning disease has no symptoms until debilitating fractures occur. Osteoporosis is a disease in which bones become fragile and more likely to break. If not prevented or if left untreated, osteoporosis can progress painlessly until a bone breaks. These broken bones, also known as fractures, occur typically in the hip, spine, and wrist.

Osteoporosis is not just a disease of aging. Did you know that children and young strong and healthy appearing people of any age can have osteoporosis? The sedentary life style of children and adolescence sitting inside playing computer and video games instead of running and playing outside is of great concern. This is the primary time for the bones to be accumulating their peak bone mass. Awareness of the problem is the first step. Doing something about it is the most important step you can take for your family and for yourself.

You can be a runner, an athlete, a champion bodybuilder; have eaten a diet that is rich in calcium, lead an active life...but you are not immune to the possibility of having osteoporosis. Be safe and informed; ask your doctor for a bone density test so that you can find out. The sooner you intervene, the greater your chances of improving your bone density.

According to the National Osteoporosis Foundation, the nations leading resource for patients, certain people are more likely to develop osteoporosis than others. These risk factors include: being female, current low bone mass, personal history of a fracture after the age of 50 or in your direct family, being thin and/or having a small frame, advanced age, family history of osteoporosis, estrogen deficiency as a result of early menopause, especially surgically induced; abnormal absence of menstrual periods(amenorrhea), anorexia nervosa, low lifetime calcium intake, Vitamin D deficiency, low testosterone levels in men, use of certain medications (corticosteroids, chemotherapy, anticonvulsants and others), an inactive lifestyle, current cigarette smoking, excessive use of alcohol, being Caucasian or Asian. If

you have any of these you have an increased risk of Osteoporosis. Did you know that women can lose up to 20 percent of their bone mass in the five to seven years following menopause, making them more susceptible to osteoporosis?

Any bone can be affected, but of special concern are hip fractures and compression fractures of the spine. A hip fracture almost always requires hospitalization and major surgery. It can impair a person's ability to walk unassisted and may cause prolonged or permanent disability or even death. Spinal or vertebral fractures also have serious consequences, including loss of height, severe back pain, and deformity.

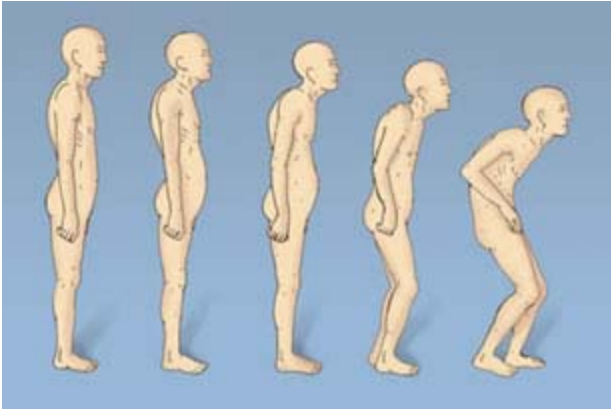
To answer your questions about Osteoporosis/Osteopenia and to find out what you can do about it, Valley Regional Hospital will be sponsoring presentations about this program, free to community members of any age, at the following locations:

- March 3, 2009 - Claremont Senior Center at 12:15pm
- March 4, 2009 – Charlestown Senior Center at 1:00pm
- March 10, 2009 – Newport Senior Center from 10:00am

Betsey Newcomb, OT/L will discuss a five week WALK TALL program beginning in April, and how it can benefit you. It is based on the program by Sara Meeks, PT., who has worked with osteoporosis patients for over 30 years. The Meeks Method is a program designed to prevent and/or arrest the highly avoidable postural aging process and reverses the patterns of postural change. The exercises are safe for nearly every one, and they start at a low level. You will learn how to optimize the stresses on the bone to promote an increase in bone mass.

To get started right away, ask your doctor for an order for a bone density test if you haven't had one in the last two years. You will also need an order for OT Osteoporosis evaluation and treatment to be evaluated and to find out what is safe and recommended for you. Individual therapy is available for people who are not appropriate for the group programs. We can help you at any stage. Medicare and some private insurances will cover this program.

Please call Valley Regional Hospital Rehabilitation Department at 542-1878 for more information on this program and to schedule your Osteoporosis Evaluation. The programs start the first week of April. Space is limited.



The diagram above represents **The Patterns of Postural Change**©, Sara Meeks' concept of what happens to the human body as, but not *because*, we age.