

# Parish Health News

## Osteoporosis

I love that Prince of Peace has kept up with the walking program that Lanae is leading. There are so many, many benefits that come from walking and other weight bearing exercises. One of the best reasons to keep walking is to decrease the chances of developing osteoporosis.

Exactly what is osteoporosis you ask? Osteoporosis is a disease that leads to weak bones. Weak bones lead to bone fractures. Bone fractures can lead to pain, obviously, but can also lead to deformities, disabilities and even early death from complications.

Your bones are not just hard, stagnant parts of your body. Like the rest of your body, they are living and growing tissue. They need good nutrition and tender, loving care to safely take you through life. Treat your bones with respect! They are part of God's design.

Women are more likely than men to have osteoporosis but men can most certainly develop it as well. Your risk for developing osteoporosis is greater if you are over age 50, have relatives who have it, have a low body weight, do not exercise regularly, smoke and if you drink more than 3 alcoholic beverages a day. Certain medications, taken over long periods of time, can also add to this risk.

The bad news is, osteoporosis can not be cured. The good news is, there are ways to prevent it or to at least slow down its progression:

- ◇ Stop smoking! There are many reasons to stop smoking and osteoporosis is one of them.
- ◇ Stay active! Just keep logging those miles and you will help build stronger bones.
- ◇ Get plenty of calcium, vitamin D and other nutrients in your diet. Consider carbonated beverages as something to be enjoyed only once in awhile as they can inhibit your ability to absorb calcium from your foods. Eat your green, leafy vegetables. Learn more about your calcium needs.

There are many resources available to help you learn more about osteoporosis. Have a conversation with your care provider about osteoporosis. Also, I would be happy to share resources about what foods are rich in calcium, how to find out if you already have osteoporosis and what you can do to improve your safety if you are living with osteoporosis.

Our newsletter articles are just a start, but Lanae and I are both happy to answer questions when we can. Additionally, we can often find resources on a variety of topics... just ask!

Sue Struck, RN

