

DOCTOR'S NOTE

Monthly Newsletter for Woodlands' CCM Program

Steps you can take to improve your bone health

BY MARK M RYAN, MD



Osteoporosis, a condition in which the bones become brittle and fragile from loss of tissue, is a devastatingly normal part of aging. 40% of women and 25% of men above the age of 50 will break a hip in their lifetime, and one out of four of these people will die within one year of breaking their hip. So here are some simple steps you can take to improve your bone health:

1. - Consume calcium. Adults need to consume 1,200 mg of calcium per day in order to meet their body's metabolic requirements, and if we fall short of this amount our body will simply take calcium from our bones. A serving of yogurt typically has 350mg of calcium while a serving of broccoli only has 21mg. If you do not get enough calcium in your diet, you should take a calcium supplement to make up the difference.

2. - Take a Vitamin D supplement. Adults need at least 800 IU of vitamin D per day, and a glass of milk has just 2 IU, yes 2 IU, of vitamin D. Sitting in the sun for 10-15 minutes a day without sunscreen, shirt sleeves, or pant legs can generate vitamin D; however, that amount of UV radiation to the skin will cause skin cancer.

3. - Be active. Weight-bearing and muscle-strengthening exercises will build and maintain bone density. Examples of weight-bearing exercises are dancing, playing tennis, walking, or using a stair machine or elliptical machine. Examples of muscle-strengthening exercises are using elastic exercise bands, using weight machines, or simple functional movements like standing from a seated position and rising up on your toes.

4. - Reduce risk. Drinking more than two servings of alcohol a day or smoking cigarettes reduces bone density. Keep areas in the house where you walk clear of trip hazards, i.e., do not lead books or shoes on the floor or stairs. Also, use rubber-soled slippers or shoes rather than just socks in the house in order to reduce fall risk.



May is
National High
**Blood Pressure
Education
Month**

- Target blood pressure for most patients is an average of <130/80
- If checking at home, make sure you have been seated for at least five minutes with both legs on the ground and uncrossed. Your arm should be resting on a surface at the same level of your heart.

This newsletter is brought to you by the Woodlands Primary Care Department:

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How do over-the-counter hearing aids compare with those fitted by an audiologist?

A small trial¹ showed that self-fitted over-the-counter (OTC) hearing aids perform as well as audiologist-fitted aids for patients with mild-to-moderate hearing loss.

The CDC estimates that only 20% of adults who could benefit from hearing aids use them. Cost is a major barrier to hearing aids. The FDA recently approved OTC hearing aids in an effort to increase access and lower cost. An average pair of OTC hearing aids is \$1,600 compared to \$4,000 for a pair fitted by an audiologist.

Researchers in South Africa randomized 68 adults with mild-to-moderate hearing loss to a self-fitting OTC hearing aid or to the same hearing aid fitted and adjusted by an audiologist. OTC patients were provided with standard written instructions and a smartphone application. In addition, they could call a technical support line for assistance. Both groups were assessed at 2 and 6 weeks to determine hearing aid



performance and overall benefit. Between weeks 2 and 6, 66% of the audiologist-fitted group contacted the provider for fine-tuning of the hearing aid while only 2% of the OTC group contacted technical support for assistance. At 6 weeks, no difference was noted in any measure between the groups. This study is reassuring for those patients contemplating purchasing over-the-counter hearing aids. One thing to keep in mind is that all of these patients had baseline hearing examinations to determine the degree of hearing loss and its cause.

1 De Sousa KC et al. Effectiveness of an over-the-counter self-fitting hearing aid compared with an audiologist-fitted hearing aid: A randomized clinical trial. *JAMA Otolaryngol Head Neck Surg* 2023 Apr 13

 **Call Us First**

My legs are swollen - do I need to go to the emergency room?

Swollen legs have many causes ranging from the benign varicose veins to a life-threatening blood clot. We are on-call 24 hours seven days a week and want to help you make the best decision. Please call us first if you are concerned about the onset of a new symptom and unsure about how to proceed: 850-696-4000