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Getting a Head Start on Osteoporosis With Bone Mineral Density Testing

Osteoporosis, a disease caused by a reduction in the density of bone mineral, is usually diagnosed after a bone fracture occurs. By then, a woman’s loss of bone density may have reached the point that little can be done to preserve a normal lifestyle. More than 20 million American women suffer from osteoporosis.

Much like hypertension, or high blood pressure, osteoporosis is a silent disease. Bone loss is gradual and, for the most part, unnoticeable in adults as they age. This process is accelerated in women beginning at menopause. In the seven years following menopause, women experience the most rapid bone loss because of a decrease in estrogen. Also like hypertension, osteoporosis can be prevented and treated with therapy and changes in lifestyle, if detected early.

Women now have a strong weapon in the fight against osteoporosis, called bone mineral density testing, or densitometry. Densitometry, currently the most reliable tool in the diagnosis and treatment of osteoporosis, measures the bone density in the spine, hip and/or wrist, the most common sites of osteoporosis-related fractures. That measurement is then compared with medical standards for someone of similar personal characteristics.

Bone densitometry is an excellent diagnostic tool because osteoporosis occurs gradually over time so bone densitometry reveals if a patient has early signs of bone loss. The exam results, combined with a medical...
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work-up, assist a physician to determine a diagnosis. The physician can then map out the best course of treatment.

A bone densitometer, which uses dual energy x-ray absorptiometry and is the most accurate and advanced technique currently available, is now accessible at Lakeland Medical Center, Memorial Hospital of Burlington, and the Aurora Health Center – Kenosha.

“The bone densitometry unit is the gold standard for these units,” explains Karla Tildahl, RN, of the Women’s Health Center at Lakeland Medical Center. “It uses a very small dose of radiation, emitted through a highly focused beam. The examination takes from 15 minutes to one-half hour depending on the number of measurements ordered by your physician. No special preparation is required, patients merely lie on an examination table and relax.”

A physician referral is required for the procedure. Contact your physician for more information, to determine if the test is right for you, or to find out if bone densitometry is available in your local area.

The bone densitometer will have the following schedule at these Aurora Health Care facilities:

Kenosha Health Center
10400 75th Street
Mondays: 8 a.m. - 1 p.m., Thursdays: 8 a.m. - noon

Memorial Hospital of Burlington
252 McHenry Street
Wednesdays: 8 a.m. - noon

Lakeland Medical Center
W3985 Country Road NN, Elkhorn
Wednesdays: 1 - 5 p.m., Fridays: 8 a.m. - noon

Registry Offers Help for Caregivers

If you are responsible for caring for a parent or relative with Alzheimer’s disease or related disorder, you know all about the devastating impact the disease can have – on the patient, the caregiver and the entire family. Family Service of Milwaukee’s Caregiver Registry is a valuable resource for families who need in-home assistance or an occasional break from the demands of caring for a dependent family member.

For a one-time fee of $35, the Registry will provide callers with a list of screened, qualified individuals who may be available for private employment. The Registry can be utilized as often as needed at no additional charge.

Family Service developed the Registry as part of its Alzheimer’s Caregiver Training Program, an intensive training series designed to provide in-home workers with the specialized skills necessary for working effectively with individuals with Alzheimer’s disease or related disorders. Since the program was launched four years ago, over 150 caregivers have completed training. Training is now being offered in a new self-paced format, and is expected to expand the number of caregivers on the Registry. All Registry members must complete the training, pass a criminal background check and provide positive references.

The Alzheimer’s Caregiver Training Program and Caregiver Registry are funded through a grant from the Helen Bader Foundation, Inc.

For more information about these programs or other ElderServices offered by Family Service of Milwaukee, call Kathy Intravaia or Aviva Zweben, (414) 344-3344.
Medication Studies Need Volunteers

The Wisconsin Center for Advanced Research

At the Wisconsin Center for Advanced Research qualified volunteers are needed to study and evaluate investigational medications and treatments for a number of gastrointestinal medical conditions.

The center is looking for patients with the following diagnoses:

- Chronic Hepatitis-C patients who have failed previous Interferon therapy.
- Hepatitis-C that has never been treated.
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome with constipation.
- Stomach pain or indigestion, with no history of ulcer.
- Stomach upset from NSAID use.
- Type I diabetics that have difficulty with digestion.
- Stomach upset caused by nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medication such as Ibuprofen, Aleve, Orudis, Daypro, Naproxen, Relfen or Asprin use.

Participants receive all study-related care at no charge, including doctor visits, laboratory services, and study medication and/or treatments. Financial compensation is provided for selected programs.

If you or someone you know would like more information about a research study, please feel free to speak with one of our study coordinators.

For more information call (414) 769-5407 or (414) 649-5200 and leave a message for Jean or Sue. They will return your call promptly.

New Pharmacy Locations

Aurora Pharmacy is pleased to announce the opening of the following pharmacy locations.

And just a friendly reminder as we approach the winter season, Aurora Pharmacy provides free home delivery of prescriptions every weekday.

Aurora Pharmacy – South Shore
(located in the lobby of St. Luke’s South Shore)
5900 South Lake Drive, Cudahy
Monday-Friday: 8 a.m. - 8 p.m.
(414) 489-4600

Aurora Pharmacy – Wales
(located in Pick ‘N Save)
W320 S1807 B State Road 83, Wales
Monday-Friday: 9 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Saturday: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sunday: 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
(414) 968-9570

For information on additional Aurora Pharmacy locations, call (414) 389-2555.
Arizona Sun Tour: You can still get your kicks on old Route 66

Set off with Mayflower Tours for the warm Arizona sun, the history and scenery of the west, as well as a renewed appreciation for the tenacity of those hearty Americans who migrated along Route 66 to the "promised land"—the west.

You'll pass Amarillo, Texas, home of the famous Cadillac Ranch, the Painted Desert and Petrified Forest National Park. At Flagstaff, you'll head north to the breathtaking Grand Canyon. In Sedona, see the spectacular red rock formations; then travel to the Valley of the Sun, Phoenix and Scottsdale. Continue to Tuscon, where you'll spend four nights, and experience the DeGrazia Gallery, a tram ride into Sabino Canyon, a drive through Saguaro National Park, and a visit to the town of Tombstone and Xavier del Bac, a 17th century Spanish mission. In Roswell, learn about aliens when you visit the Roswell International UFO Museum; then visit the Route 66 Museum of Clinton, Oklahoma.

Your tour includes round trip motorcoach transportation, 12 days, 20 meals and $60 in Mayflower Money.

A Look Back to Senior Celebration at the Zoo

Linda Dirksmeyer gives hand massages as part of Aurora Health Care's Senior Celebration at the Zoo.

Departs March 7

Please join us for an informative video presentation about the tour on:

Wednesday, December 10
2 p.m.
St. Luke's Medical Center
2900 West Oklahoma Avenue

Individuals making a deposit on the day of the video presentation will receive a free gift.

For reservations call
(414) 389-2555
or toll free,
1-888-5-FREEDOM.

For more information about the tour, call Kerry or Amy at Omega World Travel, (414)325-5020 or 1-800-332-3012.
Community Calendar

All sessions are free unless otherwise noted.

Special Events

**$ Investment Series $**
Presented by Bob Hebl, Investment Representative, Edward Jones

**Wednesday, March 4**
Principles of Money Management and Fixed Income Investments

**Wednesday, March 11**
Investments for Growth, Convertible Bonds and Stocks

**Wednesday, March 18**
Mutual Funds, Annuities and Insurance

**Wednesday, March 25**
Retirement Planning and Tying it All Together

All sessions from 2 - 3:30 p.m.
Come for one or come for all!
Freedom Village
8616 N. 72nd Street
Call (414) 389-2555 to register.

Senior Day at the Milwaukee Art Museum

**MILWAUKEE ART MUSEUM**

10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Free admission, refreshments, tours, music, free bus program and discounts at the Art Museum Shop and Deli.

**December 17, 1997**
Gabriele Münter: The Years of Expressionism, 1903-1920 and Highlights of the Permanent Collection.

**February 18, 1998**
Scholastic Art Exhibition and Highlights of the Permanent Collection.
Call (414) 224-3843 for more information.

General Health

**Let's Talk About Prescriptions (Brown Bag)**
Bring your prescriptions, including over-the-counters, for the pharmacist to review.
Learn about interactions, timing, etc. of your medication regime.
Presented by Aurora Health Care pharmacists.

**Wednesday, February 25 at 2 p.m.**
St. Luke's Medical Center
2900 W. Oklahoma

**Wednesday, March 11 at 2 p.m.**
West Allis Memorial Hospital
8901 W. Lincoln Avenue
Call (414) 389-2555 to register.

Screenings

**Glaucoma Screening**
Every Thursday
West Allis Memorial Hospital
8901 W. Lincoln Avenue
Appointments required.
Call (414) 328-6115.

**Hearing Screening & Referral Service**
Every Monday
West Allis Memorial Hospital
8901 W. Lincoln Avenue
Call (414) 328-7410 to register.
Community Calendar

Support for Loved Ones and Caregivers

The Balancing Act:
Using Activity-Focused Care to Moderate Behavior in Persons with Dementia

These workshops will introduce you to different ways of working with and modifying behavior of persons with dementia, making everyday living more fulfilling for both caregivers and those with dementia. Attend one or both programs.

Programs sponsored by:
Sinai Samaritan Geriatrics Institute
Alzheimer’s Association of Southeastern Wisconsin
Jewish Family Services
Jewish Community Center

Monday, December 8 at 6:30 p.m.
Using Religious Rituals and Memories to Promote Positive Interactions
Speakers:
Rev. Jan Summers
Cedar Campuses, West Bend
Chaplain Robert Rotgers
Village at Manor Park, Milwaukee
Rabbi Ronald Shapiro
Congregation Shalom, Milwaukee

Monday, December 15 at 6:30 pm
Using Activities to Modify Behavior
Speakers:
Dr. Michael Malone
Sinai Samaritan Geriatrics Institute
Louise Malone, RN, CS, MPH
Sinai Samaritan Geriatrics Institute
Sonia Willenson
Caregiver and Volunteer at Seven Oaks Dementia Care Unit

Programs held at the North Shore Library
6800 N. Port Washington Road
Call (414) 390-5800 to register.

Support Groups

Care of the Caregiver
Provides supportive atmosphere where caregivers can discuss concerns, share ideas.
Co-sponsored by the Village at Manor Park and West Allis Memorial Hospital.
Every other Thursday
10 - 11:30 a.m.
West Allis Memorial Hospital
8901 W. Lincoln Avenue
Call (414) 328-6800 to register.

Living Through Loss
Provides a special environment to help in the healing process.
Every first and third Tuesday
10 a.m. or 6 p.m.
West Allis Memorial Hospital
8901 W. Lincoln Avenue
Call (414) 328-6800 to register.

Starting Anew
Stroke survivors and their partners can participate.
Co-sponsored by the Village at Manor Park and West Allis Memorial Hospital.
Third Wednesday of every month
1:30 - 3:30 p.m.
West Allis Memorial Hospital
8901 W. Lincoln Avenue
Call (414) 328-6800 to register.

You have three choices in life; you can:
Watch things happen
Make things happen or
Wonder what happened.
Helping You Understand Medicare Supplemental Insurance

If you are like most persons covered by Medicare, you find it complex and confusing. And, like many other beneficiaries, you find it difficult to determine what, if any, additional health insurance you should buy. We’ll answer commonly asked questions. However, we will not recommend any particular insurer or policy.

Q. Why do I need Medicare supplemental insurance, or Medigap insurance?
A. As many of you may have discovered after a major illness, Medicare does not cover all medical services, does not pay the full amount for services, and has deductibles.

Q. Tell me more about the gaps in Medicare coverage.
A. The primary gaps that affect most Medicare recipients are:

- The inpatient hospital deductible which can be charged each time you are admitted as an inpatient within a benefit period, 60 days. The current deductible is $760.
- The annual $100 deductible for physician and other medical service providers.
- The 20% coinsurance and charges in excess of Medicare-approved amounts.

While there are other gaps in Medicare coverage, these are the three primary concerns for individuals when looking at insurance choices.

Q. What can I do to fill the gaps in Medicare coverage?
A. Traditionally, individuals purchase a supplemental insurance or continue coverage from their former employer’s group insurance policy. Other options include joining a managed care plan, such as a health maintenance organization (HMO) or a Medicare Risk Product. These latter two options will be addressed in the Spring 1998 issue of Freedom 55/65 News.

Q. What should I look for when purchasing supplemental insurance?
A. First, review any insurance you already have to see whether you need and can afford more insurance. Second, decide which gaps you want to cover. Most experts recommend that a good supplemental insurance includes coverage for the Part A deductible (inpatient services) and the $100 Part B deductible for outpatient/physician services. Additionally, they recommend extended home health care coverage. Filling these gaps usually provides comprehensive coverage.

Q. Do I need more than one supplemental insurance?
A. No. One comprehensive insurance is all you need. Duplicate coverage is costly and unnecessary.

Q. Are hospital indemnity, long term care or specified disease insurances the same as Medicare supplemental insurance?
A. No. The above types of coverage are generally limited in scope and are not substitutes for supplemental insurance or managed care plans. Benefits under these policies are not designed to fill gaps in Medicare coverage and cannot be sold as a Medigap insurance.

Q. Can I switch from one supplemental insurance policy to another without penalty?
A. Yes. Insurers are required to waive pre-existing condition waiting periods when one supplement policy is replaced with another. However, DO NOT cancel your current insurance until you have received your new policy and are sure it meets your needs and that you will keep the policy.

Karen Sweeney
Freedom 55/65 Coordinator
West Allis Memorial Hospital
The Great Icescape for Kids
Grandparents Can Make a Difference!

This is your chance to skate on the Olympic oval with a grandchild or two, or even your favorite sports mascot. This fund-raising event benefits children served by the Visiting Nurse Association of Wisconsin's (VNA) Pediatric Home Care Program, and the Pediatric Hospice Program.

The VNA began providing Pediatric Home Care in 1994 and serves newborns and children to age 18, in critical need of home health care. The littlest patients come to the VNA for many reasons — premature infants and children with childhood cancer make up the majority. But the VNA also cares for children with asthma, diabetes, HIV/AIDS and those suffering from abuse and neglect. The Visiting Nurse Foundation enables the VNA to provide charitable care to many children and their families who otherwise could not afford these critically needed services.

So, if you care about kids and want to make a difference, participate in a fun and healthy activity! Invite everyone you know to sponsor you or skate with you. You could win great prizes just for raising money for the kids. And everyone who attends is eligible for fabulous door prizes.

The Great Icescape for Kids
Grandparents Can Make a Difference!

When the Weather Outside is Frightful...

The cold and snowy months ahead promise winter fun... and shoveling and slick pavement. “There is always the risk of accidents and injury when we are exposed to freezing temperatures and slippery conditions.

By following some very simple safety practices, many winter injuries can be prevented.” says John Whitcomb, MD, medical director of Emergency Services at St. Luke's Medical Center.

Shoveling
Avoid back strain or pulled muscles by bending at your knees, not your back, and do not twist your body without pivoting or moving your feet. Take a lot of breaks while shoveling heavy snow or large areas.

Falling
Reduce injury from falls by sprinkling salt or sand on ice patches on walkways or steps. Avoid going outside in ice storms. If you must cross an icy area, walk slowly and carefully, and hold on to a solid stationary object for support, if available.

Frostbite
Dress appropriately: protect your ears, nose, fingers and toes — the body parts most likely to be frostbitten. If you experience a burning sensation and your skin feels hard and brittle, get inside immediately and soak the exposed area in lukewarm water. Remember, alcohol is not a good way to avoid frostbite.
Post-Hospital Care

Aurora Health Care hospitals and medical centers are committed to providing you with the best possible care. An important part of this means making sure that you will have the follow-up care you need after you leave the hospital. Throughout your stay, your doctor, nurses and social worker will be carefully planning ahead for your post-hospital care.

As a patient, when you no longer need acute care (the medical care that can only be provided in a hospital), you are discharged from the hospital. This, however, does not necessarily mean that you no longer need medical care. Because it takes time to explore the various options for post-hospital care, plans need to be made early in your stay so that when you are ready to be discharged, there won’t be delays.

Q. What Are Your Options?

A. Home Care

Home care can include nursing care, personal care and physical or occupational therapy. It is usually intermittent rather than around-the-clock, and supervised by an RN under the direction of your physician. Home care can be provided in your home or at the home of a relative.

Medicare pays for home care that fulfills Medicare criteria, usually more immediately after discharge from the hospital rather than a few weeks later. Supplemental insurance can be applied after your Medicare benefits are depleted. Care that is not covered by either Medicare or your supplemental insurance will need to be paid for privately. Financial assistance programs are available if you are eligible.

Swing Beds/Subacute Care

A Swing Bed program provides services for individuals who need short-term skilled nursing care or rehabilitation beyond acute care hospitalization. Subacute units can provide the same skilled care. Swing bed units may be within the hospital or may require a move to a different facility. Each option may be paid for by Medicare benefits if your condition meets the Medicare guidelines.

Residential Facility

A residential facility is a place for people to live who should not be living alone, or prefer not to live alone, and do not need skilled nursing care. Assistance with bathing and dressing is provided if needed. Meals, housekeeping and social activities are also provided.

Nursing Homes

Some individuals need nursing home care only long enough to become independent again. Others with long-term, chronic problems find that they need ongoing, skilled care. Most people submit three to four applications to ensure that they have a place to stay upon discharge. A close relative or friend will be the best person to help you. Social workers will assist you and your family in selecting a home, but someone close to you will need to visit the home and begin the application process.

Medicare pays for nursing home care only if: 1) the nursing home is certified and participates in Medicare, and 2) your condition meets Medicare criteria. Usually this means that you are at the nursing home for rehabilitation or skilled care. Medicare will pay up to 100 days per year, but only if you continue to meet their criteria.

Adult Day Care

Adult day care benefits both caregivers and the individual needing care. It provides a change of scenery and stimulating activities, while allowing the caregiver a day or more off every week. This helps caregivers to provide care over a longer period of time.

Your physician and other staff members will make recommendations for your post-hospital care that you should consider very carefully. The professionals caring for you have had experience with situations like yours, and can offer very good advice. However, the final decision about where you stay after a hospitalization is always yours.
Correcting Bunions and Hammertoes

Your feet are built to withstand a lifetime of pounding. But over time this pounding takes its toll. With age, the front part of the foot spreads out, leading to painful hammertoes and bunions.

Fortunately, surgical remedies have proven successful.

Hammertoes

Hammertoes are a result of muscle imbalance causing one or more of the small toes to hook downward. They rub against the shoe, causing painful corns, calluses and swelling.

Surgical correction can involve removing part of the bone. A stiff wire splint then holds the toe in place during healing. This takes about two weeks (although you have to refrain from heavy labor for three to six weeks). If only one toe is involved, the procedure can be done on an outpatient basis under local anesthetic.

Bunions

Bunions are unsightly bumps at the base of the big toe. With chafing, they tend to become irritated and swollen. Although bunion splints usually don’t work, prescription shoes can alleviate the pressure.

Surgically, bunions can be corrected by a procedure called bunionectomy, in which the big toe is realigned. Some sculpting of the first metatarsal bone may be necessary. Again, a simple wire splint holds the bones in place during healing.

Because bunionectomies are more involved, they are generally done in the hospital, under general or spinal anesthetic. Recovery takes longer and you may need a walking cane or crutches. Plan on no heavy labor for several months.

With today’s advanced medical techniques, results of foot surgery are excellent, with faster healing and less pain. You’ll be back on your feet before you know it.

If you would like more information about the treatment of bunions and hammertoes, please call Orthopedic Services at St. Luke’s Medical Center, (414) 649-6499, the Orthopedic Clinic at Sinai Samaritan Medical Center, (414) 219-7837, or Aurora Medical Group, Hartford Clinic, (414) 670-7120.

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