

THE ADVOCATE

Health tips and resources for MCG employees and their families

STICKS & STONES MAY BREAK YOUR BONES...

How to strengthen your bones
to prevent breaks and fractures
as you age.



BONES ARE ORGANS, TOO!

Just like our heart, liver, kidneys or lungs, our bones are delicate organs that require care and attention throughout the various developmental and growth stages of our lives. Like all organs in the body, bones respond to their physical and chemical environment and that environment is directly influenced by the lifestyle choices we make - how we move, what we eat, and the chemicals we ingest.

There are 206 bones in the human body and each one is alive and unique. Some are dense while others are spongy; some are large while a few are as delicate as insect wings. Most bones touch other bones but some simply "float", not touching another bone - like your knee cap.

Bones provide shape and support for the body, as well as protection for vital organs. Bones serve as storage sites for minerals and bone marrow is responsible for the development and storage of blood cells.

BONES AND AGING

As we age, bone loss and risk of fractures increase for both males and females. Our bodies are constantly removing old bone tissue and replacing it with new. However, after age 40, less bone is replaced and osteoporosis becomes a concern. Here are some important ways to keep as much bone mass as possible as we grow older.

Up until age 25-30 we are accumulating our peak bone mass. During this time in our lives, it is important to get enough exercise, calcium (1,000 mg daily) and vitamin D (1,000 IU per day). At the same time, avoiding smoking, excessive alcohol intake, and eating unhealthfully can protect bone mass as well.

After age 40, when the bone replacement process slows, getting enough calcium, vitamin D and exercising every day is crucial to avoid gradual bone loss. At age 50, women need to increase calcium intake to 1,200 mg daily while men can stick to 1,000 mg.

Even though we live in the sunshine state, we may need to take a vitamin D supplement. This is especially true for those who are obese or have darker skin, because less vitamin D can be converted by the body into a usable form. Please note that supplementing higher than recommended levels of Vitamin D and calcium may have adverse side effects. Talk to your doctor.

FEEDING BONES

Eating healthfully helps us absorb the calcium needed to keep our bones fortified.

How? Plant foods from vegetables and fruits contain non-digestible carbohydrates and fibers that nourish the healthy bacteria that live in our intestines and increase our ability to take in calcium from our diet. Calcium is usually consumed through milk, yogurt, cheese, broccoli, and grains. Vitamin D is also needed to help absorb calcium, which can be found via sunshine, or in certain foods like fatty fish, red meat, and egg yolks.

Learn more about calcium by visiting <https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/Calcium-Consumer/>

CALCIUM SUPPLEMENTS

There are two basic types of calcium supplements: calcium citrate and calcium carbonate. Calcium citrate is easier on the stomach and can be taken without food. Calcium carbonate needs the acid in your stomach to dissolve the tablet and it is best taken after a meal. It is important to remember that the body can only absorb approximately 500 to 600 mg of calcium at a time, therefore separate doses are required. To get absorbed in the intestine, calcium needs vitamin D. Most of us need anywhere from 600 to 2,000 international units a day.

If you need assistance with getting the right balance of calcium and D, talk to a MYC dietitian. The first 5 visits are free!



POROUS BONES

Osteoporosis is the most common metabolic bone disease in the US. As we age, our bones can become brittle and weak and this can lead to fractures.

Early prevention and treatment are essential in the appropriate management of osteoporosis. Common prescription treatments for osteoporosis include bisphosphonates, monoclonal antibodies, and parathyroid hormone analogs. These medications work by slowing down the breakdown of bone and/or increasing bone formation.

- Bisphosphonates are available as oral tablets that can be dosed weekly or monthly.
- Monoclonal antibodies are injectable treatments that can be dosed every 6 months or every year.
- Parathyroid hormones are injectable treatments reserved for patients who are very high risk for fracture and are dosed daily.

Pharmacy benefits include coverage of generics at \$5 copay per month (preferred pharmacy). Brands are covered, however prior authorization is required. Once approved the maximum copay would be \$150 for specialty medications. Copay assistance may be available for certain medications.

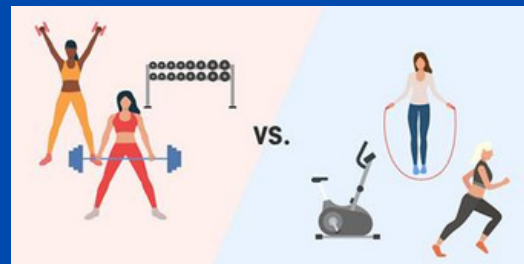
Questions about the above referenced treatments can be directed to your MYC pharmacist, Alma Leon. at ext 6406.

GOT BONES? KNOW YOUR BENEFITS!

Many people with osteoporosis have not been screened so they are not aware they have osteoporosis. It is often overlooked and under-treated in large part because there usually aren't symptoms until you have a fracture.

Appropriate screenings and early diagnosis are key to good bone health. The gold standard is a Bone Mineral Density Test or DXA which is X-ray technology that measures the amount of bone density, usually in the spine and hip. DXA is a covered benefit for the following: women age 65+, men age 70+, and anyone younger with one risk factor.

Contact your nurse advocates (Jennifer Ruiz, ext 6409 or Debbie Miskell, ext 6407) if you have any questions regarding screenings and medical coverage.



BONES NEED EXERCISE

Muscles tug on bones - and that's a good thing! In other words, the more we use our muscles, the more tugging, toughening, and bone-building occurs throughout our life span.

This is especially important as we age. According to a recent study from wake forest university, **weight training is the most effective exercise we can do as we age.**

- Lifting weights is far more effective at preserving lean muscle mass as we age while cardio can cause a decrease in lean muscle mass.
- As we age, it becomes harder to regain muscle, so it is imperative to preserve it through weight bearing exercise
- Lean muscle helps preserve bone density and structure lowering risk of osteoporosis and bone breaks
- Stronger muscles improve balance and coordination, reducing the risk of falling
- Trained muscles also improve resistance to tears and other musculoskeletal injuries.

If you need assistance in setting up a personal plan to build healthy muscle mass, feel free to reach out to the fitness center for guidance at ext 3979.

THE LINK BETWEEN CHRONIC STRESS & OSTEOPOROSIS

It should come as no surprise to learn that chronic stress can contribute to or worsen a number of diseases, like heart disease, diabetes, depression, and Alzheimer's, among others. In recent years, scientists have also learned that chronic stress can lead to osteoporosis. As already mentioned in this newsletter, our bodies regularly break down old bone tissue and replace with new bone tissue throughout our lifetime, though it slows as we age. Without getting into too much science, chronic stress alters this process by stimulating the breakdown and inhibiting growth. The result is a decrease in bone mass and deterioration of bone quality.

Stressors are everywhere but engaging in stress reduction activities can help – through mindfulness and meditation, exercise, breathing exercises, and making time for leisure. For more guidance on stress management, contact LAMP at (941)741-2995.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Quit Smoking Now (1 hr) - October 7 @ 6pm
Contact Vanessa at ext. 6418 to sign up

At the Downtown Fitness Center:
Therapeutic Yoga (30 min) - Wed @ 12pm
Body Reset (30 min) - Wed @ 12:30pm

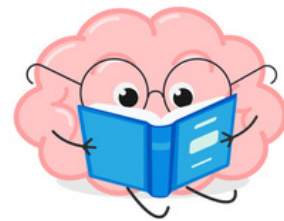
W@W Resiliency Series - September 15
Ask your Worksite Wellness Champion for details.

ENOUGH ABOUT BONES

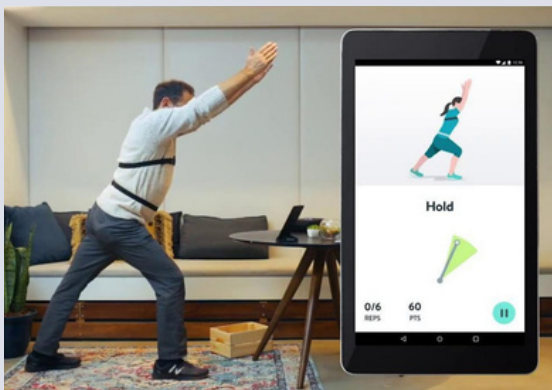
What good are strong bones without a healthy strong mind? Just as physical exercise strengthens our bones, cognitive training stimulates the brain, helping it grow and develop new connections as we age. The more we challenge the mind, the better it is at processing information.

The following fun activities provide ways to keep us sharp, helping to improve memory, problem-solving, creativity, and other cognitive functions. Give one a try this week!

- Word Games
- Puzzles
- Card Games
- Chess & Strategy Games
- Reading



Hinge Health



Hinge Health offers physical therapy and simple solutions for joint and muscle pain. No office visits and no copays mean easy access to the therapy and care you need and deserve in the comfort of your home or office.

Members on the Manatee YourChoice health plan are eligible to participate in Hinge Health programs at no cost to them.

Nearly 200,000 people nationwide are using Hinge to alleviate pain, reducing the need for drugs or surgery!

Get started at <https://www.hingehealth.com/mcg1>



YourChoice Advocates Are Available to Help!

**ALLISON MINARDI**

Worksite Wellness Manager
aminardi@manateeyourchoice.com
x3667

- Ergonomics & Desk Station set up
- Posture Assessments
- Pre-Work Stretch program

**ALMA LEON, PHARM D, RPH**

Pharmacy Advocate
aleon@manateeyourchoice.com
x6406

- Consultations
- Prior Authorizations
- Cost Saving Opportunities
- Compound Prescription Reimbursement
- Pharmacy or medication related questions

**CLARIBEL GILL, MS**

LAMP Counselor & Psychiatric Clinic Coordinator
cgill@manateeyourchoice.com
x6408

- Individual, couples, and family counseling.
- Schedules appointments for in-house counseling, Psychiatric ARNP, and assists with medication management calls.

**DEBBIE MISKELL, RN**

Nurse Advocate
dmiskell@manateeyourchoice.com
x6407

- Pre-authorizations
- Proper sleep, bone health, & heart health
- Healthy Pregnancy
- Provider Referrals
- Nurse Related Questions

**FLOREY MILLER, CDE, RD**

Nutrition & Diabetes Advocate
fmiller@manateeyourchoice.com
x6410

- Help managing diabetes
- Discuss nutrition and diet
- Assess risk for diabetes

**JENNIFER RUIZ, RN**

Nurse Advocate & Health First Coord.
jrui@manateeyourchoice.com
x6409

- Nurse Advocacy
- Health First
- Bariatric Program Coordinator
- Healthy Weight Resources
- General Health Guidance
- Community Physician Referrals

**JULIE DRACKETT**

Fitness Coordinator
jdrackett@manateeyourchoice.com
x3966

- Learn stretches and strengthening moves to support mobility and decrease discomfort
- workspace ergonomic assessments
- Fitness Programs

**RANDI MCDOWALL, LCSW**

LAMP Supervisor/Care Coordinator
rmcdowall@manateeyourchoice.com
x6469

- Worksite programing regarding Behavioral Health Topics
- Help finding in-network Therapists/ Psychiatrists
- Coaching sessions for members participating in certain wellbeing programs

**VANESSA RENE, CPHT, RPHT**

Pharmacy & Tobacco Advocate
vrene@manateeyourchoice.com
x6418

- Tobacco Cessation Aids
- Prior Authorizations
- Vaccination Questions
- Compound Reimbursements
- Pharmacy Related Questions



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