

Suburban Life

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Calcium helps beat brittle bones

By Shirlee Iden
staff writer

Osteoporosis, labeled by one physician as "the disease of the weak," has gotten a lot of scrutiny of late by scientific and lay communities. It may be oversimplification to explain osteoporosis by saying it's "the mother meant when she repeated endlessly, "Now drink your milk, it's good for you."

Well, mother was right. And though you may not be eating at her table these days, she's right-on decades later.

What's more, if you're her female offspring, it's even more vital to ingest enough calcium to prevent the "disease of the weak," which affects the amount of strength of bone tissue.

Both men and women suffer bone loss, but in women the process is accelerated after menopause, though it begins in everyone around age 35.

As bone mass decreases, a fall, blow or lifting action that wouldn't bruise or strain the average person can easily cause bones to break in one with osteoporosis. Fractures in the upper spine of older women commonly produce "dowager's hump" and severe loss of height.

Although calcium deficiency is the prime cause of bone loss, others are diet, age at menopause, lack of exercise, family history, body weight and excessive use of alcohol, coffee and tobacco.

THERE IS NO cure, but there is treatment, and even hope for prevention with proper nutrition, exercise, limiting smoking, caffeine and alcohol, and hormone therapy.

Further, a new diagnostic tool called Dual-Photon Absorptiometry, has come into use.

It has been installed in only four facilities in the state, one in Farmington Hills Center for Metabolic Diseases, one in a Southfield clinic, and in two hospitals. The machine uses low-level radiation to obtain an accurate assessment of a woman's bone density.

"With this information," said Dr. Paul Parente of the Farmington Hills center, "a woman can utilize diet and exercise to maintain or improve bone strength, secure in the knowledge that she is helping to avoid the dangers of osteoporosis before it's too late. No woman any longer need fall prey to the pain and suffering associated with osteoporosis."

Dr. Donald Meier of the Southfield clinic said of the machine, "It uses about 2 percent of the radiation required for a spine series or one third that of a chest X-ray. This is far and away the earliest method to detect bone mineral loss. There was no way to do preventative medicine in osteoporosis before this."

THEORIES THAT calcium can lower blood pressure and help prevent colon cancer remain unproven.

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for Metabolic Diseases

Researchers at University of Oregon Health Sciences Center have found that people with high blood pressure tend to consume diets low in calcium. More studies are indicated.

At Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, calcium supplements given to people considered at high risk for colon cancer due to family histories resulted in a sharp reduction in the growth rate of cells lining the colon. Again, more research is in order.

The Dairy Council of Michigan reports that a lack of estrogen seems to increase the breakdown of bone tissue, and that without sufficient amounts of the hormone, women have a harder time absorbing calcium from the foods they eat.

TWO FREE pamphlets, called "Are You at Risk for Bone Disease?" and "Calcium — You Never Outgrow the Need for It," are available by writing to Dairy Council of Michigan, 30600 Telegraph, Suite 3380, Birmingham, 48010.

"Many women are afraid to take estrogen," Meier said. "They fear cancer of the endometrium or breast cancer. But no increased incidence of cancer has been reported when estrogen is given carefully and cyclically."

Whether it is calcium or estrogen that become the miracle makers for mature women, or whether a new breakthrough is on the horizon, it's just like mom is still watching over us to insure the best quality of life possible for her girl at any age.



JERRY ZOLYNSKY/photographer

Dr. Donald Meier of the Southfield clinic said of the machine which measures bone density: "This is far and away the earliest method to detect bone mineral loss. There was no way to do preventative medicine in osteoporosis before this."

She helps small businesses plow through big problems

By Louisa Okrutsky
staff writer

It takes more than a catchy name and a trendy product to become regarded as yet another savvy entrepreneur.

If you've ever entertained thoughts of becoming your own boss and landing on Easy Street, you have lots of company. Last year in Oakland County, 300,000 new businesses opened their doors.

In the Farmington-Farmington Hills-Novi area, there were 3,000 small businesses ready and waiting for that first customer last year. If those businesses follow the national average, half of them will fall within the first five years of operation. That's the word from marketing consultant Mary DiPaolo, of Farmington Hills.

"The number one reason why businesses fail is lack of management experience," said DiPaolo. "People don't know how to structure a business to meet consumer needs and to make it work for them."

Before beginning her own consulting firm, Marketrends, last year, DiPaolo served as the in-house marketing information and research analyst for Florist's Transworld Delivery. She is host of a six-part community access cable show, "Focus: The Small Business Environment," now in reruns. The program airs at 1 p.m. and 7 p.m. Thursdays on Channel 12.

Through both experiences, she's met owners who've misidentified their business problems and sought to pursue the wrong solutions.

"THERE WAS this guy who wanted to move his store into a mall. He said his location on one of four corners of a busy intersection was hurting his business because customers couldn't turn into his parking lot. His store was perfect for his business. But he didn't display his products properly.

"In store displays are very important. Impulse buys, bubble gum, razor blades, the National Enquirer, are always next to the register. They're not in another corner of the store.

"I helped him rearrange his displays. That was his problem. Customers couldn't find or see all the things he had to offer.

"And we saved him the cost of an unnecessary move to a location that was bad for him.

"To DiPaolo, success follows adherence to the "Four P's" of business: product, price, promotion and place issues. Many fledgling business people try to provide what they'd like to sell instead of what they think they can sell, she says. A mania for movies doesn't automatically put one ahead in the video rental business.

"YOU MUST assess your own

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marketing analyst

personal qualities, tastes and attributes. You have to ask yourself, are you sure that's what you want to get into?"

Plan ahead, she advises. Decide who your customer is. What will you offer. How will you promote your product or service.

"Ask yourself, 'Where am I now? Where am I going? How do I get there? Next, carry it out. Do what you say you want to do.'"

Owning a business doesn't mean that someone else will do the work. In many cases, owners must train employees to serve the customer and act as proper representatives for the business.

"Improperly trained employees can cause a business to fail. You can have a bad staff in terms of their

training. You have to give them motivation, incentive programs."

ANOTHER COMMON reason many endeavors fold is lack of enough capital to last until the business becomes profitable enough to support itself.

For women in business, another problem comes into play in the financial arena. "There are bureaucratic problems." Securing a business loan can be harder for women.

"For many women, there's an inability to get initial financing on their own without a co-signer or without a husband to back them. These problems are slowly being overcome."

Many endeavors fail because the businesses are located inappropriately.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Mary DiPaolo of Farmington Hills, advises small business owners on matters ranging from actually starting the business to changing its location.

Volunteers keep young ideals

By Richard Lech
staff writer

Peace Corps volunteers working overseas might seem to be tempting targets for terrorists.

But Peace Corps director Lorett Miller Ruppe said the volunteers' dedication to helping others should be their shield.

"I'm hopeful the special work they do, the fact they're living in the world areas with the people will protect them," Ruppe told the Madonna College graduating class recently.

"I like to say they are the anti-terrorists of this world. They are working against the terrors of hunger, poverty and disease."

RUPPE, WHOSE daughter Antonette graduated from Madonna in 1984, was the speaker at the college's commencement ceremonies at St. Genevieve Catholic Church in Livonia.

Ruppe also received an honorary degree from Slater Mary Francienne, Madonna's president, and read a letter of congratulations to the graduates from President and Mrs.

Reagan. Ruppe's husband, former Michigan congressman Phillip Ruppe, was in the commencement audience. One of their five daughters is serving with the Peace Corps in Nepal.

Noting that this year marks the Peace Corps' 25th anniversary, Lorett Ruppe said it was time for Americans to be "rechallenged" to helping the poverty-stricken people of the developing world.

Ruppe said the Peace Corps volunteers are the best ambassadors for peace the United States has. Saying that peace is more than just the absence of war, Ruppe maintained there can be no peace in the world as long as hunger, poverty and disease are prevalent.

"You have a real obligation to help end the things that cause a lack of peace in the world," she told the graduates.

The Peace Corps volunteers let people throughout the world know what Americans are really like, she said, and provide a different image of Americans than the stereotyped image.

"I don't want it to be just 'Miami Vice.' I don't want it to be solely our military. I want it to be us, we Americans."

APPOINTED director of the agency in 1981 by President Reagan, Ruppe said she has so far traveled to 47 of the 63 nations served by the agency. In each country she has visited, she said, she has seen the positive effect the volunteers have had.

"I don't see the burning flags and the clenched fists. I see workers lining up saying, 'Long live America.'"

Ruppe pointed out that the Peace Corps got its start in Michigan in October 1960. President John F. Kennedy, making an impromptu speech on the steps of the student union of the University of Michigan, proposed an "international youth service program."

Since the first Peace Corps volunteers left for Ghana in August 1961, more than 120,000 Americans have served in the organization. More than 5,000 of those came from Michigan, Ruppe said.

She singled out for special men-

tion Madonna staff members Jerry Charbonneau and Lorraine Jakubicki. Charbonneau, a professor at the college, served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Colombia. Jakubicki, who heads the Madonna teacher education department, worked as a volunteer in Iran in the 1960s.

THE CURRENT Peace Corps staff of 8,000 represents about half the number who participated in the early 1960s. According to information provided by the Peace Corps, some 100,000 Americans requested information from the agency last year, and about 3,400 were recruited. Volunteers are paid an average living allowance of \$230 a month, plus the government also banks \$175 per month for each volunteer, which adds up to \$4,725 after 27 months of training and service.

The makeup of the Peace Corps has changed since the early 1960s, Ruppe said. More older Americans are being recruited. The average age is closer to 30 today, compared with



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