



Health



Take care to prevent osteoporosis

Osteoporosis, a "thinning" of the body's bone structure, is the 12th leading cause of death in the United States, yet many of its victims have no idea they are vulnerable until it is too late.

"Osteoporosis is a silent disease with no early-warning signs," says Dr. William Peck, chairman of the 1984 National Institute of Health Consensus Panel on Osteoporosis. "The first symptom is almost always a bone fracture, usually in the spine, hip or wrist. The bones become so fragile that a vertebra can break just from getting out of bed in the morning."

Bone loss is particularly severe in post-menopausal women. While there is no proven method to add new bone and reverse the decline, good preventative measures can better your chances of avoiding the disease.

John Pekkanen, writing in the November Reader's Digest, declares that adequate calcium is the cornerstone of any diet to prevent osteoporosis.

"The NIH panel recommends that pre-menopausal women get 1000 mg. of calcium daily, the equivalent of three eight-ounce glasses of low-fat milk alone," he writes. "Post-menopausal women not on estrogen-replacement therapy should consume 1500 mg. a day."

The sad fact is their calcium intake is far short of that goal.

"American women from their mid-40s on average only about 450 mg. of calcium in their diet, and studies show a disturbing trend toward even lower amounts," he continues. Moreover, alcohol, caffeine and nicotine speed the body's excretion of calcium and other minerals.

Along with diet two other factors are seen to be helpful in avoiding osteoporosis. One is exercise, which increases bone mass and reduces bone loss. How much exercise and what kind have not been determined, but anything that puts mechanical stress on the bones is helpful.

Finally, estrogen-replacement therapy is recommended. The hormone estrogen decreases sharply at the onset of menopause and so does a woman's ability to absorb calcium. "Estrogen replacement poses a risk-benefit question," Pekkanen notes, "because it does increase slightly the risk of endometrial cancer. By including another hormone, progesterone, the risk of endometrial cancer appears to diminish, and bone loss may be slowed even further."



Workshop held

A group of nurse's aides from seven local nursing homes participated in a workshop entitled "A Positive Approach to Long Term Care" which was held at Little Flower Manor, Wilkes-Barre. The program, co-sponsored by Penn State Wilkes-Barre and the Wyoming Valley Nursing Home Administration Group, provided an in-depth look at the nursing home resident and his/her special needs. Shown here are, from left, seated, Heidi Anderson, Lucy McDermott, and Mary Atherholt, program participants from Leader Nursing and Rehabilitation Center East. Standing, from left: Sandra Belden, M.S.W., program instructor; Ina Lubin, continuing education, Penn State Wilkes-Barre; Tom Sweeney, administrator, Meadows Nursing Center; Joe Booth, personnel director, Little Flower Manor; and Sister Xavier, administrator, Little Flower Manor.



Course completed

Students of Nesbitt Memorial Hospital's course for improved babysitting recently completed all requirements and earned their certificates. Instructors Carol O'Malley, R.N., and Judith Letukas, R.N., familiarized teens, 12-16 years old, with the proper techniques of babysitting and the principles of child care. Special emphasis was placed on safety for infants and young children, cardio-pulmonary resuscitation and first aid treatment. Shown here are, from left, seated, Lisa Dydynski, Plymouth; Sandy Savakinas, Pittston; Jodi Ann Gillow, Avoca; Jen Pugh, Kingston; Melinda Ostrowski, Wilkes-Barre; and Jennifer Keating, Wilkes-Barre. Standing, Carol O'Malley, R.N., instructor; Dawn Simms, Trucksville; Michelle Shemo, Shavertown; Mary Lilley, Wilkes-Barre; Stacie Williams, Wilkes-Barre; Jennifer Lasman, Forty Fort; Lora Appel, Luzerne; Dawn Appel, Luzerne; Joanne Derwin, Plymouth; Benedicta Tinnes, Swoyersville; Michelle McCabe, Plains; and Karen Young, Plymouth.

Health Center will help you quit

If you are a smoker, you probably hear it everywhere. "Quit smoking," say your friends, neighbors and maybe your family.

Perhaps someday you would quit, except for all those people preaching at you - and that quitting just seems too hard to do.

It can be done. Over a million and a half Pennsylvanians alone have stopped smoking in recent years. Many of them learned how to quit with help from the Monroe-Noxen Rural Health Center. They offer support and direction to interested smokers.

Kicking the habit doesn't have to be so difficult. You can stop smoking by finding the method that is easiest and least painful.

Before you actually stop smoking, think about a way that is best for

you. Would you quit all at once or do it by gradually withdrawing? Some smokers prepare themselves by reading self-help guides, attending smoking clinics or using products such as nicotine chewing gum.

There are many ways to persuade yourself that smoking wastes your time, money and health. Write down the major reasons why you want to stop smoking. Try to pinpoint those situations, locations and activities that trigger a need for a cigarette.

Draw up a contract with a good friend who can encourage you, particularly when your will power weakens. More important, be your own friend and reward yourself for a job well-done.

Your attitude is most important for overcoming the smoking habit. Start thinking of yourself as a non-

smoker instead of an ex-smoker.

Soon after quitting you will begin feeling better about yourself. Even within 24 hours, you'll notice a difference. Along will come fresher breath, a disappearing cough and an end to smoke odors in your hair and clothes.

When you stop smoking, you gain control over your life. Your body repairs the damage caused by smoking and the money you burned away on cigarettes can be saved or spent on other pleasures.

If you need help, contact Rural Health Corporation, 825-8741. We have a wealth of information, plans and advice to help you stop smoking. We won't preach at you. For good health, we want you to choose for yourself.

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