

Suzanne Graziano, left, NCH Nursing Director, & Jennifer Miller, NCH Total Joint Coordinator, will help a patient rebuild their body after an osteoporosis-related fracture at NCH.

Build Bone Strength at Any Age to Prevent Fractures in Your **Golden Years**

Slumped shoulders, a neck jettied forward and back pain: even in young adults that could spell osteoporosis. Thankfully, prevention is also possible at any age. "It's never too early or too late," says Suzanne Graziano, NCH Director of 6 South Neurosciences, 5 South Orthopedics, 5 North General Surgery/Medical and 1 East Express/OBS. Though she typically sees patients after an osteoporosis-related fracture, Graziano wants to prevent them. Her advice for every age:



CHILDREN: Good habits last a lifetime. Eating a healthy diet is ideal, and parents should introduce a daily exercise during the child's prime bone-building years, recommends Graziano, who also suggests eating organics. Skip the processed foods entirely, she says.

SENIORS: With diet and exercise, even someone who has low bone mass can control the progression. She recommends Qigong, a Chinese program of physical movements and breathing that is related to Tai Chi, for its therapeutic benefits and because it promotes balance and flexibility. Adding a fortified protein beverage or a smoothie to your diet will also encourage healthy bones.

TEENS/YOUNG ADULTS: By age 28, our bodies have achieved maximum bone formation, and Graziano says posture is crucial in the years before. Extended time spent hunched over a mobile device puts unnecessary stress on your neck. To counter it, Graziano says regular stretching is key to proper body alignment. "Keep your spinal column straight," she adds. "It is essential to strengthen your core and your spine."

OVER 35: Our bone mass begins to decline, very slowly at first, and speeds up in our 50s and 60s. Risk factors and medical history increase that inevitable rate of loss, and post-menopausal women naturally begin to lose minerals found in their bones. Graziano suggests adding a nutritional supplement and one specific to bone building. Weight-bearing exercises have also proven to improve bone health. "You can strengthen bone integrity if you strengthen muscle integrity," Graziano explains.

ALL AGES: Because bone is living tissue, our skeleton completely regenerates itself every seven years, explains Graziano. Get plenty of calcium, vitamin D and magnesium through diet or supplements.

When to see a doctor:

You may want to talk to your doctor about osteoporosis if you went through early menopause or took corticosteroids for several months at a time, or if either of your parents had hip fractures.

Your family doctor may suggest bone density testing. Screening for osteoporosis is recommended for all women by age 65. Some guidelines also recommend screening men by age 70, especially if they have health issues likely to cause osteoporosis.

If the bone density test is very abnormal or you have other complex health issues, you might be referred to a doctor who specializes in metabolic disorders (endocrinologist) or a doctor who specializes in diseases of the joints, muscles or bones (rheumatologist).

Call **Suzanne Graziano** at **(239) 642-3916** for more information on **NCH Orthopedic Program**