No.8/April 2012



## BONES & JOINTS

# ANG WIG FIRIS EDPOROSS **Jeff Gottfurcht**

climbs Mt. Everest to conquer arthritis

une in to bone health



### Having strong bones is no accident.

### Kids build 80 percent of their lifetime bone mass by age 20

To maximize bone development, kids should consume a well balanced diet with at least three servings of a calcium rich food every day, for example, one cup of low fat milk or yogurt, one and a half slices of cheese, or one cup of calcium-fortified juice. If kids are getting calcium through milk products, they will also be getting enough vitamin D to help absorb the calcium into their bones.

### Get out and play!

Bones respond to activities just like muscles do. Again - this is particularly important during the bonebuilding years.Weight bearing exercise like walking, dancing, running, yoga and Pilates cause the muscles to pull on the bones and stimulate

the bone-building cells to work harder. Mixing up your routine to continually "surprise" the bones with new movements will maximize bone development.

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### **Preventing bone loss at** menopause is as critical as building bone in puberty

Estrogen provides an important protection for bone and as it diminishes during menopause, bonebuilding cells become less active. The best way to minimize the rapid bone loss associated with menopause is to double bone-building efforts. What we urge our kids to do applies as we age. The strategies to prevent bone loss are the same - a calcium and vitamin D rich diet, weight bearing activity and being aware of factors that increase bone loss.

### **Bone loss increases the** risk of breaking a bone

The field of bone health is now focusing more on fracture prevention. The interplay of risk factors for bone loss (some you can control

### BEST TIP

### **Measuring your risk**

### Know yourself

Physical mobility, vision loss, medications, home and environmental hazards all affect a person's risk of falling.

### Calculate your risk

The new FORE Fracture Risk Calculator<sup>™</sup> can help you understand your risk based on four main contributing factors.

### **Request a bone** density test

The test known as the DXA 3 is an X-ray that can calculate your bone density known as your T-score or your bone mass.

### Cardiovascular Health

Circulatory problems such as symptomatic postural hypotension, arrhythmia, or neurologic dysfunction can contribute to your risk of falling.

and others you can't) affect the strength of your bones and their ability to support you. Age and gender are well-established risk factors for bone loss. Others risks include smoking, consuming more than three drinks of alcohol a day, certain chronic diseases, as well as the use of cortisone-like steroids (like prednisone), tranquilizers and sedatives, and anti-seizure medications.

### **Preventing fractures** becomes a high priority as we age

Exercises that improve balance and leg strength can help prevent falls. Practicing good posture by standing tall with your shoulders rolled back must be a priority for protecting the bones in the spine. Always keep a straight back and hinge at the hips with bent knees when bending to pick up things. Avoid exercises and activities with forward folding. For more information please visit www.americanbonehealth.org.

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## "Miracle" fruit may be the secret to improving bone health and fighting osteoporosis

## Prunes: beyond digestive health

### A Florida dietician may have discovered the secret to preventing fractures and osteoporosis.

"I have tried many fruits and vegetables, and I have yet to see any of them as effective as a dried plum when it comes to bone density," says Bahram Arjmandi, Ph.D, Chairman of the Department of Nutrition, Food, and Exercise Sciences at Florida State University. "The dried plum, or prune, as I usually call it, slows the breakdown of bone while allowing bone formation to continue. This results in a net gain in bone mineral density."

According to Professor Arjmandi, dried plums provide numerous health benefits, including bone protective effects.Using pitted plums in the one-year study, Dr. Arjmandi and a group of researchers from FSU

tested two groups of postmenopausal women. Over the 12-month period, the first group, consisting of 55 women, ate roughly 10 dried plums daily, while the other 45 females consumed 75 grams of dried apples. All received daily doses of calcium and vitamin D.

"The prune has a unique composition.About three ounces of prune has 1,000 milligrams of potassium, 3.4 milligrams of boron and a good amount of antioxidants, such as phenolic and flavonoid compounds."

The group consuming the dried plums demonstrated significantly higher bone mineral density in the ulna and spine, compared to the group eating dried apples. The team's research, "Comparative Effects of Dried Plum and Dried Apple on Bone in Postmenopausal Women," was published in the British Journal of Nutrition and

secured funding through the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Dried plums can be eaten in different forms and can be included in numerous recipes. As for how many an individual should consume for bone health, "Some is better than none," says Arjmandi. "One should start with two or three dried plums per day."

Dr.Arjmandi adds, "Our study confirms the efficacy of dried plum in improving bone mineral density in postmenopausal women. Postmenopausal women in this age range are prone to accelerated bone loss. And to our knowledge, the present study is the first to clearly indicate that postmenopausal women benefit from consuming dried plum in terms of bone."

> **CINDY RILEY** editorial@mediaplanet.com



### CALIFORNIA DRIED PLUM BAHN MI SANDWICH

### **Combine:**

1

- 1 pound ground turkey
- cup California Dried Plum 1⁄4 purée
- <sup>1</sup>⁄<sub>4</sub> cup chopped canned water chestnuts
- tablespoons finely chopped 3 green onions
- 2 teaspoons fish sauce
- tablespoon minced garlic
- teaspoon sriracha sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 5 baguette sandwich rolls (8-10 inches long) or 4 (8-10-inch) pieces baguette
- 2 jalapeño chiles, thinly sliced (seed if desired)
- 20 sprigs cilantro
  - Sriracha mayonnaise\*
  - Carrot and daikon pickles\*\*

## Managing and preventing osteoporosis and osteopenia

As we age, our bones lose mass, which can make them brittle and more prone to breakage. Getting a proper diagnosis from your doctor ensures you know the right way to manage the health of your bones.

### Finding your score

Osteoporosis and osteopenia are two conditions that involve bone mass.They are related, but different. According to the U.S. National Library of Medicine, osteopenia is a deficiency of phosphorus and calcium within the bone tissues, which can lead to weak or brittle bones. Osteoporosis, according to the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, is defined as lowered bone mass and the deterioration of the bone, or porous bones.



bone against the size of the bone measured, and that is called BMD or Bone Mineral Density. Therefore, the lesser the weight, the lesser the BMD and the worse the osteoporosis."

Your doctor will also X-ray the spine to check for asymptomatic compression fractures.

"Osteoporosis is defined as a T-score less than -2.5 and osteopenia is -1.0 to -2.4," said Dr. Huh, "But if the patient has low impact fractures, we consider that osteoporosis as well since BMD only measures the quantity of the bone and not the quality of the bone."

#### Treating bone loss

risedronate or raloxifene, as well as hormone therapy, are also available.

#### **Planning ahead**

Knowing your risk for osteoporosis and osteopenia can help you care for your bones now.

"Bone loss most frequently occurs in postmenopausal women," said Dr. Huh. "In order to prevent it, calcium, vitamin D exercises, fall prevention, stopping smoking and minimizing alcohol intake are all important."

Age, gender, ethnicity and family history also play an important role in your bone health.

Dr. Huh explains that women over the age of 65 and men over the age of 70 should have their BMD checked every two years. However, if they are already taking medication, they need to be checked annually to see how they are responding to treatment.

California

Dried



Testing determines which condition you have, using a bone density machine. An individual is given a T-score and a Z-score, determined by comparing the patient's results with that of a person of the same age with healthy bones.

"You are measuring the size of the spine-and most of the time hip bone—and also the weight of the bone," said Dr. Brian Huh, M.D., an internal medicine physician and rheumatologist in Los Angeles, California."You divide the weight of the According to Harvard Health Publications, diet and exercise remain key in protecting bones from future damage. Making sure your body is getting all of the nutrients and minerals it needs is crucial. Weight-bearing exercises can also help strengthen the bone.

Medications like alendronate,

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### INSPIRATION

**Question:** What inspired Jeff Gottfurcht to climb 29,000 feet to the peak of Everest? **Answer:** Jeff used his diagnosis of Rheumatoid Arthritis as motivation to accomplish his lifelong dream.

## Moving beyond the pain



### The dream

Conquering Mt. Everest would be a significant achievement for anyone, but for 39-year-old Jeff Gottfurcht, reaching the top was particularly gratifying. Gottfurcht, a father of three, was first diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis in his late 20's, and was told he'd likely be in a wheelchair by age 40.

"My knees were swollen to the size of cantaloupes, my fingers were the size of bananas, and eating was horrific because my jaw hurt so much," explains Gottfurcht, who's struggled with joint issues since the 7th grade. "One day I just woke up on a trip with my wife-to-be and the flare never turned off."

A longtime athlete, Gottfurcht was crushed by the prognosis. "I

was destroyed. Being a climber my whole life, the first four years of being diagnosed I was practically bedridden, unable to walk, and on tons of drugs. But, I knew deep down somehow I would turn this obstacle into the stepping stones to my dreams. I saw a poster of Mt. Everest when I was young, and became obsessed with it. It represented the highest point on earth. I knew I was born with a purpose and one day would climb it.

#### One step at a time

"I had to make sure my mind was not distracted," says Gottfurcht of his 2011 climb in Nepal, where he made history as the first RA sufferer to reach Everest's peak. "I had to train the parts of my body that did work well to function at a much higher level."

Aside from painful arthritis, Gottfurcht endured blinding winds in the death zone, the stretch of mountain just below the summit. "You can't last up there longer than 24 to 48 hours. It was something I'd never seen before – bodies of past mountaineers, frozen in time, as we would climb higher and higher."

Gottfurcht, a professional speaker and author, hopes to inspire other arthritis sufferers with his continued adventures. "From the great walls in Yosemite to the great six faces of the Alps, there are many peaks that offer the chance to challenge me. Everybody has a Mt. Everest, whether it's being able to walk across the room to the kitchen or play ball with their kids. Never stop trying."

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### Living with arthritis and osteoporosis does not mean sacrificing travel and enjoyment.

## Vacationing with limited mobility

Living with arthritis and osteoporosis does not mean sacrificing travel and enjoyment.

There are many attractive vacation options available for those who have trouble moving around, or who are at risk of falling. In particular, vacations that include riding tours, or activities taking place within a particular area (such as cruise ships), are increasingly tailored to those with limited mobility. It is recommended that passengers look for cruising accommodations that include handrails in all corridors, stairwells and bathrooms, for safety. Additionally they should seek accommodations with elevator service to all decks, including sun decks, for convenience and easy access.

important to request a room that is equipped with an emergency call button that immediately alerts the crew of a crisis. Travelers may also consider a ship that travels on smooth, inland waters, like rivers and inland waterways, to avoid the turbulence of the open ocean. All ships are now equipped with extensive first aid kits, defibrillators, oxygen kits, and certified personnel in case of a fall or other injury. In booking a cruise, it is also important to consider the nature of the off-boat excursions. For example, narrated riding tours are available throughout the states, including destinations like the Mendenhall Glacier in Juneau, Alaska. Additionally, cer-

for passengers at risk of falls, it is

tain excursions can be adapted to meet travelers' needs. For instance, the Owls Head Transportation Museum in Rockland, Maine offers a special ride around the museum grounds in an early 1900's Ford Model T. For someone who can only walk a limited distance, the Chesapeake Bay Cruise in Tangier, Virginia also offers a tour via golf carts. Museum excursions, such as the Vicksburg Battlefield Museum of Memphis.



are easily accessible to those with limited mobility as well.

Weak bones and joints shouldn't slow you down; there are many safe vacation options for those living with osteoporosis and arthritis.





#### **NEWS IN BRIEF**

### The Basics

**Question:** Are you experiencing joint pain? **Answer:** Don't wait, consult your doctor now.

Arthritis is the most common cause of disability in the United States affecting roughly 21 million adults. Understanding the different types of pain associated with arthritis will help a person understand if they should seek the guidance of a physician.

Gary R. Feldman, M.D., FACR, offers insight into the three most common types of arthritis pain, "A sudden onset with sharp severe pain accompanied by swelling of an isolated joint is generally seen in gout or infectious arthritis.Stiffness with aching accompanied by swelling that is progressively worse affecting the hands, wrists, and feet is seen in rheumatoid arthritis. Aching or sharp pain with the use of the hand and thumb or on weight bearing in the knee or

hip is seen with osteoarthritis."

According to Dr.Feldman age does play a role, "Osteoarthritis, the most common type of arthritis generally begins in individuals in their 40's and 50's. It is not uncommon for women in their child bearing years to develop rheumatoid arthritis, whereas gout is most common in men over 50. Arthritis can also occur in young children, and is known as Idiopathic Juvenile arthritis."

It is imperative to speak to a doctor immediately if you suspect that you might be experiencing arthritic pain. Dr. Feldman explains that, "It's important to seek treatment as early as possible in order to reduce pain, possible disability, and the need for surgeries such as joint replacements." An individual plan, based on lifestyle, is important as well. Dr. Feldman uses a comprehensive approach, "Many innovative treatments are changing the lives of arthritis patients and making surgery the last option for the treatment of arthritis."

## **Technological** advancements: living safely made easy

The majority of fractures experienced by older adults are the result of a fall. While it is known that falling can be a debilitating if not fatal occurrence, there are now a number of home improvement technologies that make the living environment safer and allow persons to stay many years longer in the homes they love. With the great number of adults who will experience a fall after age 65, it becomes increasingly more important to make the home environment a safe and secure one. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, one in three adults over age 65 will fall each year, making falls the leading cause of injury and death in people older than 65. Although death rates from falls have risen sharply in recent years, less than half of these people speak to their healthcare providers about it.

Those suffering from osteoporosis, arthritis and other conditions may not realize the magnitude of an injury that can be associated with a fall. Many falls will render a person immobile and require extensive rehabilitation. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention emphasizes the severity of some of the most common injuries including lacerations, hip fractures and head traumas. Fractures of the spine, hip, forearm, leg,

ankle, pelvis, upper arm, and hand are the most frequently affected bones. These injuries can make moving and living independently difficult and even increase the risk of early death. In 2009, over two million nonfatal fall injuries were treated in emergency departments and of these patients more than 25 percent were hospitalized.

Two of the most dangerous areas of the house, for those with limited mobility and at risk of falling include the bathroom and stairways. We spend years investing in our homes to create a warm, inviting environment, so it is important to understand that comfort and independence need not be sacrificed in order to stay there. Today,a number of technologies exist making it possible to continue utilizing these spaces with the reassurance of a safe experience.

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For those who have trouble moving due to pain, or are at risk of a serious injury or fracture in the event of a fall, the stairway can pose a difficult obstacle. Stair lifts serve as an instrument in moving safely up and down stairs in a secure manner. Whether your home uses straight or curved stairs, outside or inside, stair lifts are adapted to a number of environments. These lifts allow a person to remain seated and control his or her movement up and down stairs, while the seatbelt helps maintain balance. It is also important to select a lift that includes the auto-stop function in case of obstruction on the stairwell.

Similar to the stair lift, specialized bath tubs are available with seated designs tailored to people who have difficulty moving or are at risk of falling. These tubs typically feature easy entry with little movement.Bathtubs that include a power lift chair are better suited for those who prefer to sit. For those who are more comfortable standing, it is important to have high sidewalls with grab bars. In either case it is always important to have slip-resistant floors to maximize stability, and safety handles to maintain balance.

In addition to the safety mecha-

nisms built into these advanced baths, whirlpools and hydrotherapy can be used to relax muscles and relieve pressure on joints for rest and relief. Massaging jets are also thought to encourage blood circulation and decrease inflammation associated with arthritic pain.

It is necessary to take precautions at home to create a safe environment. Although bathrooms and stairways are often the most dangerous areas of the home to navigate, recent technology has made the possibility of staying in your own home, and still living safely, ever more possible.

> SANNA DEVRIES editorial@mediaplanet.com

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## Learning to build strength

### **Benefit your body**

According to American Bone Health, exercise and increased physical activity are fundamental elements in both preventative and treatment programs for osteoporosis. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) explains that weight-bearing physical activities help muscles and bones to build strength by working against gravity. Exercise is also crucial to those living with arthritis as it can reduce pain, stiffness and inflammation. Building muscle around the joints helps to increase strength, while weight loss can help to alleviate additional pressure on bones and ioints.

### Finding the exercise that is right for you

The CDC suggests walking, bicycling, swimming and dance as exercises for persons with osteoporosis and arthritis. Additionally, balance is noted as an important part of building strength, including martial arts such as tai chi. American Bone Health similarly recommends yoga or Pilates as a strength building method, but it is important to note that some poses are safer than others. Daily flexibility exercises can also help those suffering from stiffness of the joints.For those who find it difficult to maintain an exercise regimen, a group setting can be motivating. There are programs for all levels of experience, so do not hesitate to participate out of a fear of embarrassment.

### Taking a stance on fall prevention

Mary Poisson, a dedicated team member of Senior Resource Group, shares a personal story of her parents and their struggle with osteoporosis and arthritis. Both of Mary's parents continued to reside in their family home during the later years of their life. Although her parents were not in poor health, being over 65 years of age they were at a higher risk of falling, particularly her mother who had been diagnosed with osteoporosis. Living alone at home, Mary's parents did not find the motivation they needed to maintain the exercise regimen recommended for seniors with osteoporosis and arthritis.

Unfortunately, like so many seniors in America, Mary's mother did experience a fall, after which she was in need of extensive rehabilitation. As Mary's father was unable to care for her mother alone, Mary chose to leave her job in order to help care for her parents. During the time that she spent at home, Mary became aware of several important things. First and foremost, she realized that had preventative measures been taken earlier, her mother might have avoided the fall that took her independence. Secondly, she realized the lack of socialization resulting from her parents' limited mobility was damaging to both their physical strength and emotional wellbeing. Mary's parents were not getting the exercise they needed to maintain their vitality.

It was after her mother's fall that Mary's father decided to join a community where he would have the opportunity socialize, and the motivation to exercise. The community also offered the support of numerous health care professionals and fitness programs that helped him to build the strength crucial to fall prevention. Mary's only wish was that her mother had made the decision to become part of community sooner, so that she might have benefited in the same way.

### Making the commitment

Whether living at home or in a community, it is important to consciously take measures toward fall prevention. These measures include creating a safer living environment and maintaining a comprehensive exercise schedule, which will also help to build strength and fight osteoporosis and arthritis. If you are someone who has trouble sticking to a fitness routine, a group setting may offer the greatest chance of success.



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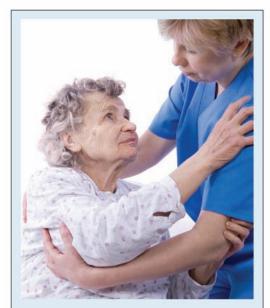




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*FACT:* 1 in 3 adults 65+ fall each year, and falls are the leading cause of injury death as well as the most common cause of nonfatal injuries and hospital admissions for trauma.\*\*

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