TO: Senior Newsletter

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RE: Osteoporosis and Fall Prevention

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Osteoporosis is a disease in which bones become less dense, resulting in weak bones that are more likely to break. Osteoporosis can progress without pain or symptoms until a bone breaks. Osteoporosis has the reputation of being an “old woman’s disease”. Although it is common in white and Asian females, older than 50 years of age, osteoporosis can affect men and women at any age.

Three factors are related to whether a bone breaks from a fall, the fall itself, the force and direction of the fall and how fragile the bones are. Prevention of falls is very important to people with osteoporosis.

Factors that increase the risk for falling:

● Muscle weakness around the hip joint
● Increased unsteadiness when on the feet
● Intake of more than 3 medications

Causes of falls:

● Loss of footing
● Loss of traction
● Vision problems
● Loss of balance
● Diseases that impair mental or physical functions
● Certain medications
● Changes in reflexes
Changes in muscle and fat

How to avoid a fall outdoors:

- Use a cane for added stability while walking outside
- Wear warm boots with rubber soles and good traction when it is snowy outside
- In bad weather, find and use 24-hour pharmacies or grocery stores that take orders over the phone and that deliver
- When going out, keep your hands free by using a shoulder bag, fanny pack or backpack
- Stop at curbs and check the height before stepping down

How to avoid a fall indoors:

- Keep things off the floor
- Floor surfaces should be smooth and level but not slippery
- Wear supportive shoes inside the house
- Secure all carpets and rugs to the floor so they cannot slide
- Keep electrical cords and telephone lines out of the way

For more information, talk with your healthcare provider about osteoporosis prevention and detection.

This article has been provided by Central Michigan District Health Department, which serves the local residents of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola, and Roscommon Counties. Visit our website at www.cmdhd.org or join us (Central Michigan District Health Department) on Facebook.

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