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January 2011

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PROGRAM

IN-HOME
OSTEOPOROSIS BONE
HEALTH PROGRAM

Happy New Year

Happy New Year and Welcome to the new Mobile Physical Therapy Newsletter format. We have made some changes to the newsletter! We will have physical therapy related tips, a client of the month, and exercise advice. This month's PT Tip is on proper lifting techniques.

PT Tips: Lifting

Improper lifting technique can cause neck, shoulder and back pain and possibly even more serious injuries. Learning the proper way to lift will help you minimize the risk of pain and injury.

- Plan ahead before lifting heavy objects. Make sure you have a clear path. This will help you avoid any awkward or sudden movements that can strain your muscles.
- Test an object's weight before lifting by pushing it with your foot. If it seems too heavy, ask for help.
- Lift with your legs, not with your back. Don't lean over an object to lift it. Face the object you intend to lift and avoid twisting. Instead, stand close to the object, bend your legs and keep your back straight, then lift.
- Keep feet shoulder-width apart and maintain your balance by distributing the
- object's weight equally on both sides of your body.
- If a back injury does occur, seek help from a physical therapist. What starts as a minor back injury can progress to a chronic condition without early intervention.

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Client of the Month: Marge



We are happy to introduce you to Marge, January 2011's Client of the Month! Marge is 84 years old and lives in Saint Louis. Five years ago, Marge was one of the more than 795,000 Americans who had a stroke ([for](#)

[stroke statistics, click here](#)). Since her treatment in the hospital and at rehab, Marge (lower left) has been living at home with her husband Earl (right) with the help of her family and a morning caretaker (Nancy--upper left).

Several months ago, Marge began having more trouble with daily activities such as walking with a walker and transfers, and had fallen several times. Her family and caretaker thought that it might be a good idea to try physical therapy.

Although Marge had her stroke several years ago, she and other stroke survivors still have the potential to make improvements. Marge has been working very hard in physical therapy (twice a week) and has been doing her home exercise program.

We are happy to say that her hard work is paying off! She has made improvements in her walking speed, walking quality and balance. Most importantly, she has reduced her fall risk!

Congratulations Marge. Thanks for working so hard!

APTA Home Health Section



HOME HEALTH SECTION

AMERICAN PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION

Association's Home Health Section.

Mobile
Physical
Therapy is a
member of
the
American
Physical
Therapy

The Home Health Section's purpose is to provide a means by which Association members having a common interest in the delivery of physical therapy in the home and other alternative settings within the community may meet, confer, and promote these interests.

Vitamin D--To D or Not to D

Vitamin D and calcium have long been touted as the best nutrients for strong bones, muscles and teeth. Recent studies have shown that vitamin D could be used to fight cancer, heart ailments, autoimmune diseases, even diabetes. But too much vitamin D can damage the kidneys and the heart. **So what's the right balance?**

After reviewing nearly 1,000 published studies on vitamin D and calcium, the Institute of Medicine recently recommended that most Americans and Canadians up to age 70, who are not pregnant, need no more than 600 international units (IUs) of vitamin D per day to maintain good health. People over age 70 may need as much as 800 IUs. Previous recommendations were 400 IUs per day.

"When making these recommendations, we took into account the study data, looking at national surveys of blood levels," said Catherine Ross, professor of nutritional sciences, Penn State University, University Park, and chairman of the committee that set the recommendations.

"The blood levels indicate how much D you have in your blood, based on the amount of sunlight you are exposed to, how much vitamin D and calcium you have in your diet, and what type of supplements you are taking." **This committee, in contrast to most recent studies, surprisingly found the majority of Americans and Canadians are getting enough vitamin D and calcium.** Some adolescent girls may not get quite enough calcium, and some elderly may fall short of the necessary amounts of calcium and vitamin D. These individuals should increase their intake of foods containing these nutrients.

Sunlight is the best source of vitamin D, but not everyone receives the same exposure. According to the institute, the new guidelines for vitamin D cover the

needs of individuals who get little sun. The minimum recommended amount of daily sunlight depends on your skin pigmentation. White people should get not less than 5 minutes without sunscreen. People of color should get 15 to 20 minutes. There is no recommended maximum.

Nutritionists recommend getting the rest of your vitamin D and calcium through foods, such as oily fish (salmon, tuna), milk, mushrooms, egg yolks and fortified cereal. Daily supplements are also helpful, but experts advise people to pay attention to how much they're taking. Because people are becoming more aware of their diets and more individuals are taking supplements, the chance is higher that people may consume too much of these nutrients. Getting too much vitamin D can be dangerous and has been associated with kidney stones as well as damage to the kidneys and the heart.

"No one can overdose from sun exposure because of the way the body processes it. And too much of these nutrients in your diet is highly unlikely," noted Ross. "People can take too many supplements. That's why we made these recommendations."

Ross also noted that while the report found most of the data confirmed that do play a huge role in skeletal growth and keeping up good bone health, they could not find strong evidence that vitamin D protected the body against cancer, heart disease, autoimmune diseases and diabetes.

"While we found these studies point to the need for further investigation on the role of vitamin D and these illnesses," said Ross, "we found conflicting and actually mixed results in these studies on the effects of vitamin D on these conditions." Katherine Tallmadge, spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association supports the call for more research.

"In its most recent recommendation, the [Institute of Medicine] has established the level they believe will protect bones," Tallmadge said. "More studies need to be conducted to validate if we need to recommend higher levels of vitamin D supplementation or higher levels in the blood for protection of other diseases which have recently come to light."

What to do if you are concerned about your Vitamin D levels?

Talk to your physician or nurse practitioner about having your Vitamin D levels measured by a simple blood test.

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