

Living with Osteoporosis

I think osteoporosis makes it difficult to stay healthy in that it's just.. it's insidious. You just don't know what's going on with it. Once in a while, you know, I think, oh, my gosh, am I this old. How did I get to this age?

You know, when you're in your twenties, you think you're going to live forever. You don't think about getting sick.

There's a beginning, a middle and an end. That's why I like cooking. Create something that's uniquely you. My motivation to stay healthy is to take care of my husband, to be with him. I mean, 40 years since September, so it's been a long time.

And I want to have the kind of life my grandmother had. She lived to be 92 and she was sharp as a tack.

I thought I was taking really good care and I think I was. But, you know, you just never know. I exercise. I always worked out in the gym, lifted weights.

I like being outside. I ran all year long. Even in the winter, we always had a pretty balanced diet. We always have.

The day I broke my hip, I was feeling great. We decided to go into Cedarburg and have coffee and he was driving. He pushed the door open and it didn't go open all the way.

So I used my elbow and went backwards.

I lost my balance. I fell on the sidewalk. I knew I broke my hip. I yelled to Larry, "I broke my hip".

And all of a sudden a crowd gathered around.

Somebody called 911, and then there were people doing videos of me and I said, "Go away, you don't need to video me." So then the ambulance came and this, you know, we're going to take you to the hospital.

At the hospital, they told me I not only had a broken hip, but I had osteoporosis. I was stunned. I did not expect to ever have that diagnosis. I mean, that changed a lot of things.

But the osteoporosis kind of put a double whammy on me. I felt like there were things I had to be very careful about doing moving forward.

I did feel some stress about it because it's sort of an unknown. What's going to happen to me?

How is my life going to change? How will I be cured? Will I have to go through treatments that I am afraid to, you know, deal with?

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After the surgery, my doctor recommended that I start at the bone clinic and then I was started on a drug called Evenity and I would get a shot once a month for a year.

When I see the nurse practitioner at the clinic, I mean, just talking to her really helped me because she understood how I felt and she had treated a lot of patients. She put me at ease.

Reclaiming my health, I felt like I had to just continue to do the things that would help me, exercise, I go to a balance and stability class. I take my meds. I'm on vitamin A now. I take calcium, I do all the things I can to maintain my health.

I'd say a low point since I've had the diagnosis was just knowing that I'm getting older and I'm not as strong as I used to be.

It's changed my relationship with my body in that I don't trust it so much anymore and I don't like to be restricted, I like to kind of do what I need to do or want to do.

And there are things I have to be careful of, you know? I couldn't run. My doctor told me I probably shouldn't be riding a bicycle. I do have balance issues.

And so, you know, it's like, can I depend on my body?

It's very important to work on balance and stability, because otherwise you're very likely to fall.

The class that I go to, we just do some strength training, just modified strength training, but it's a lot of moves. They're similar to yoga.

The way I've been supported by my community in general, first of all, my husband's been very supportive, but my neighbor also has osteoporosis and she's a nurse as well. And so we talk about it.

It just really helped, helped us kind of bond. And that was kind of a nice experience because the older you get, the harder it is to make friends. And so it's been a nice experience for me.

My husband and I have taken some classes. We like to go to the botanical gardens. We're members. In moments when I feel scared, I have a strong spiritual life, so I turn to prayer. I also talk to my husband and sometimes I'll just sit down and play the piano, usually by myself.

If somebody was just diagnosed with osteoporosis, I would say, follow the advice of your physician or a nurse practitioner that you're seeing and seek out others in your community that might have it as well.

One of the things you can't do is sit around and feel sorry for yourself because it doesn't help anything.

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