

# Doctors' Voice

May/June 2013

## Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis means 'bones with holes'. It does not cause pain or illness except through increased risk of bone breaks. Bones lose their strength and density, become fragile and break (fracture) more easily because of calcium loss. Breaks are most common in the spine, hip and wrist and often occur after only a minor fall or knock. Osteoporosis particularly affects women in their middle and later years, although some men are also affected.

Most people show no signs of developing osteoporosis until a fracture occurs. Both men and women can take steps from a young age to avoid developing the condition in later life. Reduce your risk of fractures by taking steps to prevent and treat osteoporosis (or brittle bones) and avoid falls wherever possible. Activity and a healthy diet rich in calcium and vitamin D are both important.

### Risk factors for osteoporosis

- Family history of osteoporosis or fractures at older age
- Inadequate amounts of dietary calcium
- Low vitamin D levels
- Cigarette smoking
- Alcohol intake of more than two standard drinks per day
- Caffeine intake of more than three cups of tea, coffee per day
- Lack of physical activity
- Early menopause before the age of 45
- Loss of menstrual period if it is associated with reduced production of oestrogen, which is vital for healthy bones (the menstrual cycle can cease following excessive dieting and exercise)
- Long term use of medications such as corticosteroids for rheumatoid arthritis and asthma.

Some conditions place people at a higher risk of osteoporosis. These conditions include:

- Thyroid disease or an overactive thyroid gland
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Chronic liver and kidney disease
- Conditions that affect the body's ability to absorb nutrients, such as Crohn's disease and coeliac disease

See your doctor if you think you may be at risk of developing osteoporosis. Source: [www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au)

## Active in Parks – What is the Green Referrals Program?

Active in Parks, a Healthy Parks Healthy People program, encourages people to get healthy using the great outdoors!

The Green Referrals Program is a physical activity program based in parks. Individuals are supported by qualified instructors, building self-esteem, motivation, confidence and skills to exercise regularly. The sessions cater for all abilities and offer a wide range of fun activities. Linkages are made to local community organisations to encourage ongoing and increased participation in physical activity.

Here are some of the best reasons to participate in outdoor exercise:

- Reduce stress
- Boost immune system
- Improve brain function
- Instill a sense of well-being
- Enhance self-esteem and positive body image
- Reduce obesity
- Reduce incidence of diabetes
- Lower the risk of heart disease

### Who can be involved?

Anyone 18+ years that could benefit from making positive lifestyle changes. All fitness levels and abilities welcome.

To be involved participants need a referral from their doctor or health professional.

For more information contact:

**Jayde Mulder**  
**Coordinator Active in Parks**

Email: [jayde@barwonml.com.au](mailto:jayde@barwonml.com.au)  
website: [www.activeinparks.org](http://www.activeinparks.org)

Telephone: 5229 1922

# Doctors' Voice

## What is DAFNE?

DAFNE is a five-day diabetes education program designed for adults with type 1 diabetes. In type 1 diabetes the pancreas, a large gland behind the stomach, stops making insulin. Without insulin the body's cells cannot turn glucose (sugar) into energy. Participants attend the course in groups of 6 – 8 people, and together they learn the skills that will allow them to calculate how much insulin they need for the carbohydrate-containing food they want to eat. The main principles of the DAFNE program are:

- Skills-based training to teach flexible adjustment to match carbohydrate in a free diet on a meal-by-meal basis
- Emphasis on self-management and independence from the diabetes care team

The DAFNE program covers three main areas:

### 1. **Carbohydrate estimation:**

This section of the program teaches participants to estimate the carbohydrate content of whatever they choose to eat and then match this with an appropriate insulin dose. Practical exercises using real food, photographs of food, food models and food packets allow participants to practice what they have learned. The nutrition topics also include snacking, estimating carbohydrates in recipes and nutritional information panels, eating out, alcohol and sweeteners.

### 2. **Insulin dose adjustment:**

The DAFNE insulin regime is based on a basal/bolus regimen with food covered by quick acting insulin. Participants monitor their blood glucose levels before each main meal and before bed. This value, the results of previous blood glucose measurements, individual insulin to carbohydrate ratios at that meal time, and the quantity of the proposed intake of carbohydrate are all taken into account when calculating the appropriate insulin dose.

The DAFNE blood glucose target levels are as follows:

Pre-breakfast	5.5 – 7.5 mmol/L
Pre-lunch and pre-dinner	4.5 – 7.5 mmol/L
Pre-bed	6.5 – 8.0 mmol/L

### 3. **Other topics:**

Other topics such as hypoglycaemia, exercise, illness and sick day guidelines, diabetes complications, and goal setting are covered in the DAFNE program, making it a truly comprehensive type 1 diabetes self-management program.

The DAFNE program originated in Europe, and is known as OzDAFNE in Australia. For information about Geelong programs telephone 03 5244 5224. Bookings are essential.

If you have any ideas for topics, please speak to your GP or Practice Nurse

## Travel health tips

People who travel overseas have up to a 50 % chance of suffering a travel-related illness. While most travel-related illness is minor, some very serious infectious diseases are endemic in some parts of the world. All travellers should be prepared for travel and be aware of health issues and measures to protect themselves from sickness.

### **Before you travel**

There are many things you can do to prepare for a healthy holiday.

- Have a medical checkup – make sure you are healthy before you travel
- Update your immunisations and ask about other immunisations
- Pack a medical kit for yourself and any children travelling with you. Make sure you pack enough of any medications you need
- Organise travel insurance, including cover if you need to be evacuated to a suitable hospital
- Have a dental checkup
- Have a vision check and pack a spare pair of glasses.

### **While you are there – eat and drink wisely**

- Use boiled or bottled water, avoid ice in drinks, avoid fruit/vegetables washed in local water
- Ensure food is cooked thoroughly, avoid shellfish
- Food bought at hotels and busy restaurants is safest
- Take care with personal hygiene

### **While there – avoid insect bites**

Some serious infectious diseases such as malaria, yellow fever and dengue fever are transmitted by insect bites.

There are vaccines and drugs to protect against some of these, but always try to protect against mosquito bites.

For further information about safe travel practices visit: <http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/>