Drugs used to treat osteoporosis linked to osteonecrosis

We have many female patients who are taking prescription medications for osteoporosis. These drugs, known as bisphosphonates, have recently been associated with a serious condition of the jaw called “osteonecrosis.” Osteonecrosis is the death of bone which can occur due to the loss of blood supply to the bone or a problem with the bone’s ability to regrow.

Osteonecrosis has occurred, although very rarely, in patients taking bisphosphonates, and we wish to inform our patients of the condition. These drugs are sold under the names Fosamax, Actonel, and Boniva. The risk of osteonecrosis is quite small in patients taking these drugs, as it is estimated that one person per 100,000 has been affected. However, if it does occur, it can be very serious and there is no known treatment. There is also no way of determining who will develop the condition.

If you are taking Fosamax, Actonel, or Boniva, you should be aware of the symptoms of osteonecrosis. They are:

- Feeling of numbness, heaviness, or other sensations in your jaw
- Pain in your jaw
- Swelling of your jaw
- Loose teeth
- Drainage
- Exposed bone

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, or you are not certain if you are, please do not hesitate to call Dr. Kaplan or Dr. Uhrich with your questions. We would also be happy to schedule an appointment for you for an examination or consultation. Also, it would be advised to talk to your physician who prescribed the bisphosphonate about any concerns.

We do not want to alarm anyone who is taking a prescribed medication for osteoporosis because the need for taking the medication is very important to reduce the risk of bone fractures. We just want to inform you of the possibility, although very rare, of developing osteonecrosis.
Two of our interesting patients...

Joy Polcastor's “Playful Put-Ons”

One of our patients, Joy Polcastor, has a fun and playful job. She does creative singing telegrams and humorous appearances. Joy has his own business, “Playful Put-Ons.” Joy started her business many years ago after doing singing telegrams in the 1970s for “Eastern Onion,” a singing telegram service. She left the company because she had started a family and was busy with her children, but she still had friends asking her to deliver singing messages. So her business of making people happy had begun.

Having her own business allows her to be creative, but not embarrass the recipient. Among her messages, one of her motto is “Always to celebrate, never humiliate.” It is her goal to honor the special person receiving a “playful put-on” and delight the audience.

Joy has audiences in homes, restaurants, schools, and places of business. She is hired for special occasions such as birthdays, anniversaries, retirements, and graduations. However, there are a lot of non-occasions that Joy performs for as well, such as delivering “I’m sorry,” “I love you,” “I miss you,” and “Thank you” telegrams. She has been hired for cheery “Hello, I’m thinking about you” messages for nursing home residents. When delivering her messages, Joy has many different entertaining characters that she portrays. One that she enjoys is the “Stressed Out Bride” that arrives at bridal showers in a bride’s dress and veil. Another is “Myself the Elf” who delivers holiday gifts or cookies for corporate thank-yous.

It is Joy’s goal to honor the special person receiving a “playful put-on” and delight the audience.

Joy also dresses up and sings as a cheerleader, Lucy the Leprechaun, Grandma Sophie, or a tuxedoed messenger. Joy has a lot of fun delivering a message, not in costume, but in everyday clothing. She performs as someone you wouldn’t expect to break out into song, which often surprises the special person. For example, she once arrived at a pharmacy to wish the pharmacist a happy birthday. She acted as a shopper searching for age-spot cream. She started to talk to the pharmacist about how difficult it was to get old and depressed. When I start to get depressed about getting old, I just start singing to help me feel better,” and pulled a tambourine out of her bag and started to sing a song. Obviously the pharmacist was shocked, but soon realized it was a singing telegram meant for her to celebrate her birthday!

It is this kind of creativity that Joy excels at. She always tailors her performance to the person receiving the message. She asks the person placing the order lots of questions about the recipient so she feels confident that the recipient will be happy with their “gift.” It is obvious that Joy has a lot of enthusiasm and enjoys making people happy. If you have someone with an upcoming big occasion that you would like to celebrate, or if you have someone you would just like to let know you are thinking of them, give Joy a call to set up a creative and fun gift. She can be reached at (708) 870-0097 or by e-mail at joysmiles1@yahoo.com.

On Memorial Day weekend, Connie Mazgaj achieved an amazing goal! She ran in her 54th marathon. Not only is finishing 54 marathons an impressive accomplishment, she has competed in a marathon in each of the 50 United States and Washington, D.C.! In May 2008, she ran in the Madison, Wisconsin, marathon, which completed her goal of running all of the states and running a marathon in each one.

Where did she get the idea to strive for such an unbelievable goal? In one of her early marathons, she saw a woman wearing a T-shirt that said “50 States Marathon Club.” Curious, she asked her about it, and he explained that there are many runners who compete to compete across the United States. Connie soon committed herself to being one of the approximately 1,200 members of the “50 States Marathon Club.”

Amazingly, she ran her first marathon in 2002, just six short years ago. In 2002 she ran two races, and in 2003 she did two more races. Then, starting in 2004, she did one or two per month to complete 54 total marathons this May! Running a marathon is no easy feat. It is 26 miles running in all sorts of weather and on all sorts of terrain. Connie obviously experienced a wide variety of conditions in her quest to run in all of the different states. She said that the worst weather she encountered was in Seattle, Washington, where the high for the day of the race was 40°, and it rained the entire time. There were beautiful sites to see, however. She said the most scenic was the Big Sur Marathon in the mountains of California. Also breathtaking was the Anacostia in Washington, D.C., where she experienced the majesty of a glacier.

Besides experiencing the beauty of our country, Connie witnessed some devastation. She ran in the New Orleans Mardi Gras Marathon shortly after Hurricane Katrina. The marathon was going to be canceled due to the tragedy, but the officials decided to use the marathon as a fundraiser in an effort to help rebuild the city. One hundred percent of the proceeds of the race went to the cause. It was there in New Orleans that Connie ran her best time, 3 hours and 47 minutes.

She says that her favorite marathon, though, was the Chicago Marathon. Her brother, Don Poljak, Jr., found her in the crowd at the end of the race and placed her medal over her head. It was a very special moment for her to enjoy the completion of a race and share it with a family member.

Now that this goal has been attained, Connie says that she’s not sure what she is going to do with herself. Not flying all over the country is going to afford her a lot of free time. We’re sure with her determination and strength, she’ll find some other amazing goal to strive for!
Our patients’ Recipes

We are continuing to feature some of our patients’ favorite recipes. So many of our readers enjoy the recipes, so we don’t want to disappoint anyone!
Hope you like these...

Sour Cream Coffee Cake
Contributed by Yvonne Lukan

- 2 sticks butter
- 2 cups sugar
- 3 eggs
- 16 oz. sour cream
- ½ tsp. vanilla
- 3 cups flour
- 1¼ tsp. baking soda
- 1¼ tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. salt

Filling:
- ½ cup white sugar
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- 3 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 cup chopped pecans

Cream butter with sugar until smooth. Add eggs one at a time. Add sour cream and vanilla. Mix well. Add flour, soda, powder, and salt. Mix on medium speed until well blended. Grease and flour Bundt pan. Pour half of the mixture in the pan. Add filling, then the remainder of the mixture.

Bake at 350° F for 1 hour or until toothpick comes out clean.

Glaze:
- 1½ cup powdered sugar
- 1 T. melted butter
- 3 T. milk
Add 1 tsp. water, a little at a time if glaze is too thick.

Pour glaze over cooled, unmolded cake.

Chicken Enchiladas
Contributed by Michele Peterlin

- 4 chicken breasts
- 1 can Rotell brand canned tomatoes
- 8 oz. sour cream
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 package soft flour tortillas
- Shredded mild cheddar cheese

Cook chicken and cut into small cubes or strips. Mix sour cream, onion, and soup. Roll chicken, tomatoes, and cheese inside tortillas. Line rolled tortillas in an ungreased 9x13 pan. Pour soup mixture over top. Sprinkle more mild cheddar on top. Bake at 325° F for 20 to 30 minutes.