



Backgrounder: Bone Health+Osteoporosis Program *"Fit to a T @ your library"*

Program Launch

The U.S. Bone and Joint Decade (USBJD) is launching a pilot bone health + osteoporosis education program in select U.S. cities during the fall of 2005, in partnership with the Public Libraries Association and the National Network of Libraries of Medicine. This program is in response to the Surgeon General's first-ever report in 2004 on bone health and osteoporosis, and will be launched nationally following an evaluation of the pilot project. The program is called "*Fit to a T.*" The T-score is the measure of a person's bone density and susceptibility to fragility fracture.

Educational sessions will be conducted at the Seattle Public Library and other libraries in six U.S. communities. The one-hour program – aimed at the general public – will focus on bone health, osteoporosis, how to avoid fragility fractures and provide consumers with the information they need to make informed decisions on bone health. For each session, a medical expert, a health information specialist/librarian and a patient will team up to present the program. The session will feature a PowerPoint presentation, live demonstration on health resources through libraries and Medline Plus, collateral materials, discussion, question/ answer period and follow-up. The USBJD will distribute the Surgeon's General's brochure, "What it Means to You," and posters as educational materials in this pilot program. Material will also include a sheet about resources available through the library where the session is being held.

Target Audiences

The program will target men and women who are in the mid-50s and 60s, and are highly susceptible to osteoporotic fractures or have experienced a break. The goal is to target these individuals before they have a fracture, so they can take necessary steps to prevent bone disease and make changes in their lives to alter the course of the condition.

Program Goals

The USBJD is launching this effort to generate awareness and understanding about these important issues and to help reduce the 1.5 million fractures that occur annually.

Specifically, they want session participants to:

- Learn how to make an assessment of their living environment and risk for fracture
- Understand the basics about bone health in order to be able to discuss this with their primary care physician
- Acquire the skills needed to identify quality consumer health information
- Discuss these issues with family, friends and colleagues of all ages
- Participate in an assessment of the program's effectiveness (i.e., in six months or a year)

Key Messages

- Osteoporosis and other bone diseases are debilitating and can cause pain, loss of mobility and independence, deformity and mortality (*contributing to a poor quality of life*)
- The disorder affects men and women of all races and ages (*it doesn't just affect women*)
- Education with a focus on information gathering skills and prevention can help alter the course of the disease (*it's not too late to make changes*)
- Americans can have strong bones and live healthy, independent and productive lives (*through better awareness and education*)

[Background on osteoporosis](#)

Osteoporosis is the most prevalent bone condition among Americans with nearly one in two women, and one in four men, likely to suffer from it in their lifetime. Osteoporosis is debilitating, reducing a person's freedom of movement, and leads to high incidences of hip and spine fractures. Prevention education is essential to lowering the burden of disease.

The Surgeon General's report on bone health and osteoporosis, released October 2004, is the first-ever Surgeon General's Report on this topic. Surgeon General Reports identify the relevant scientific data, rigorously evaluate and summarize the evidence, and determine conclusions. The Report is a starting point for concentrated national action to understand, prevent, diagnose, and treat bone diseases. The risks associated with poor bone health are high. By 2020, half of all American citizens older than 50 will be at risk for fractures from osteoporosis and low bone mass if no immediate action is taken by individuals at risk, health care professionals, health systems, and policymakers. 10 million Americans over the age of 50 have osteoporosis, the most common bone disease. Another 34 million are at risk for developing osteoporosis. Each year, roughly 1.5 million people suffer a bone fracture related to osteoporosis. The costs are tremendous: Approximately 20 percent of senior citizens who suffer a hip fracture die within a year of fracture. Thirty years ago, doctors thought weak bones and osteoporosis were a natural part of aging, but today we know that we can do something about them. Research remains a critical component of our plans to prevent and reduce bone disease in America. But research alone cannot ensure that the appropriate actions are taken to prevent osteoporosis and other bone diseases. Americans need to learn that they are never too old or too young to improve their bone health. The Surgeon General is America's chief health educator. Surgeon General reports have always played a critical role in promoting good health and safety. In 1964, for example, the first Surgeon General's report on smoking announced medical research showing that smoking was a definite cause of lung cancer. At the time, this was ground-breaking information. And the Surgeon General's endorsement gave it significant credibility and public attention. That report led to many education programs to explain the risks of smoking.

[About the Decade](#)

The United States Bone and Joint Decade (USBJD) is the organization whose mission is "to provide national leadership and coordination of activities in the United States in the worldwide movement to improve patient care, to promote research and to advance understanding and treatment of musculoskeletal conditions during the International Bone and Joint Decade." Highly prevalent musculoskeletal conditions include arthritis, back pain, childhood conditions, osteoporosis, and major limb trauma. The worldwide Bone and Joint Decade is an international collaborative movement sanctioned by the United Nations/World Health Organization and focused on improving the quality of life for people affected by musculoskeletal disorders. President Bush has officially proclaimed the Bone and Joint Decade in the United States. All 50 states in the United States have endorsed the Bone and Joint Decade. Nearly 100 U.S. patient, healthcare professional and other organizations are participating in the USBJD. Over 90 medical schools and colleges of medicine have declared their support for the Decade.