

Talk Sheet: Accessing information on osteoporosis and fracture prevention

How to Use This Talk Sheet

This talk sheet is for Family Councils and family members to use to support access to information and gain a better understanding of current knowledge on health issues that affect long-term care (LTC) residents.

As a Family Council member, you can use this talk sheet to help gather information on osteoporosis and fractures as they affect residents, organize educational events for your Council, and facilitate knowledge sharing discussions on these issues.

As a family member, you can use this talk sheet to help you access information and ask questions regarding how osteoporosis and fracture affect your loved one.

The goals of this this talk sheet are to:

- Provide information on how to talk about osteoporosis and fracture prevention
- Support effective knowledge sharing regarding osteoporosis and fracture as they affect LTC residents
- Empower families with information about osteoporosis and fracture prevention
- Support Family Councils to carry out their goal of educating family members

Tips for discussing osteoporosis and fracture prevention at Family Council meetings

- Consider having a guest speaker on osteoporosis and fracture prevention. They will be able to provide accurate information and answer questions attendees have. Examples: the home's nutrition manager attends a Council meeting to discuss dietary interventions to ensure that all residents receive enough dietary calcium, or a speaker from the local Parkinson's Society attends a meeting to discuss preventing falls in residents with Parkinson's.
- Always respect residents' dignity and privacy. Do not discuss residents' health concerns or other sensitive issues without permission, especially if other residents are in the room.

Applying information to resident care

The Sunnyside long-term care home Family Council received an update from the home's administrator on the home's falls prevention and management program. This update included information on the percentage of residents who fell in the last 30 days.

One of the family members in attendance at the meeting was very interested in the topic because her mom was recently diagnosed with osteoporosis and she is worried about her mom falling and breaking her hip. After a discussion, it was decided that the Council wanted to know more about osteoporosis and how the home is helping keep residents with osteoporosis safe and reduce falls.

The Council decided to find resources on osteoporosis and fracture prevention to discuss at the next meeting and to invite guest speakers from the Home and Osteoporosis Canada to present at a future meeting.

As well, the Council supported Jane and her mom in getting more information about osteoporosis and how it affects Jane's mom. They gave her Family Council Ontario's *Talk Sheet: Accessing information on osteoporosis and fracture prevention*, ideas on who to talk to at the home for information, and suggestions on questions to ask at Jane's mom's next care conference. Jane left the meeting feeling empowered and equipped with information that will help her care for her mom.

- Use reputable sources of information. Not all information you find online is accurate or reliable, so consider getting information from an organization like Osteoporosis Canada or the GERAS Centre. Consider running information by an in-home expert to make sure it is accurate e.g. your home's Director of Care or Administrator.
- Keep discussions positive and productive. It's important to properly facilitate the discussion to ensure that they don't veer into negative or unproductive territory.
- Never assume. Always get accurate and reliable information.
- Remember that one person's experience may be true but not necessarily the norm.
- Remember that this is a sensitive topic and treat the discussion and people with respect.
- Set ground rules and desired outcomes for the discussion. For example, confidentiality: what is said in the meeting stays in the meeting.
- Leave time at the end to debrief and end the meeting on a positive note.

Questions to ask to guide a discussion

- What can we do to prevent falls and fractures?
- How does osteoporosis and fracture prevention affect LTC residents?
- How many of our home's residents are affected by osteoporosis and fracture prevention?
- What are the symptoms of osteoporosis and fractures?
- What treatment options or interventions are available for osteoporosis and fractures?
- Do we know what causes osteoporosis and fractures?
- How can we best support residents with osteoporosis and fractures?
- How can we support their families and our home staff?
- Is this an acute or chronic issue? Is it life threatening or altering?
- How does this affect my/my family member's quality of life?
- What can we expect as this condition progresses?

Tips for gathering information on your own

- Talk to the appropriate contact at your family member's home (e.g. the home's physician or medical director, Director of Care, administrator, Social Worker, physiotherapist) for information.
 - Ask if they know who you can contact for more information.
- Be careful if searching online for information: only visit reputable sources for reliable, accurate information and don't believe everything you read. Verify information with an expert.
- Reach out to organizations or associations that specialize in or focus on the medical issue e.g. Osteoporosis Canada or the GERAS Centre.
- When meeting with an expert or professional, have a list of questions ready to ask and a notebook or other way to take notes during the meeting.
- If appropriate and desired, have a trusted person attend the meeting with you so they can take notes. The meeting about osteoporosis or a fracture may be overwhelming for you and it can be helpful to have another set of eyes and ears.

