

Program Overview

The Goal

To make sure that a patient's first fragility fracture is their last. Currently, fewer than 20% of Albertans treated for a fragility fracture ever receive the osteoporosis care that they need to prevent the next fracture. Catch a Break is aimed at decreasing this treatment gap by facilitating communication between patients and their family doctors about osteoporosis and the treatment options that exist for improving bone health.

The Program

Alberta Health Services (AHS) Health Link staff use data from emergency departments and cast clinics across the province to identify Albertans who may have had a fragility fracture: a bone break due to underlying bone weakness/osteoporosis. These patients are mailed an initial package introducing the program and are notified that they will soon be contacted by telephone. The package includes information about bone health and osteoporosis including diet, exercise, and calcium and vitamin D supplementation.

Health Link staff then contact the individuals by phone and ask for information about how their fracture occurred. If an underlying bone weakness is suspected, the individual is invited to take part in the Catch a Break program. Information is also sent to the individual's family doctor to encourage further investigation of possible underlying osteoporosis and to start a conversation between the individual and their family doctor. In addition to the initial patient contact, Health Link staff follow up with a phone call to participants at three and 12 months. These follow-up calls help remind participants of the importance of seeing their doctor to discuss their bone health (if they have not done so already), and to learn whether participants have followed up on their doctor's recommendations. The 12-month call also measures the participant's satisfaction with the Catch a Break service.

The Outcome

More than 18,500 Albertans have been contacted since the program launched in June 2014. Over 70% of individuals have been identified as being at high risk for osteoporosis and over 80% have visited their family doctor as a result of participating in the Catch a Break program. Catch a Break is helping make a difference in the quality of life of thousands of Albertans by preventing debilitating fragility fractures that can significantly impact mobility, independence, and life expectancy.

The Team

Catch a Break was developed by AHS and the Bone and Joint Health Strategic Clinical Network's Fragility and Stability program, in conjunction with the Alberta Bone and Joint Institute. It is one of several initiatives aimed at improving the bone health of Albertans, along with the Fracture Liaison Service and the Acute and Restorative Care Clinical Hip Fracture Pathways.

For more information about the Catch a Break program, search 'Catch a Break' on MyHealth.Alberta.ca.