

The New York Arthritis Reporter

Arthritis Foundation, Inc., New York Chapter • 122 East 42nd Street • New York, New York 10168-1898 • (212) 984-8700

Women and Arthritis



Although arthritis can affect anyone, regardless of race, gender or age, the statistics are clear—more women than men are diagnosed with arthritis. Sixty percent of all people who have arthritis are female and many of the common forms of arthritis are more prevalent in women. Among those are rheumatoid arthritis (RA), lupus (SLE), osteoporosis, fibromyalgia and some types of osteoarthritis (OA). With this in mind, it is critical for women to become well-educated about these diseases and empower themselves with the necessary tools in case they, or others close to them, are ever affected by one of these conditions.

There are many different theories about why women experience arthritis more often than men. One of the most prevalent suggests that estrogen, a female sex hormone which fluctuates with the menstrual cycle, may play a critical role. Dr. Margaret Smith, Professor of Clinical Medicine at New York Medical College and Fellow in American College of Rheumatology, explains, "If you look at the statistics on autoimmune diseases, they clearly suggest that there are hormonal effects at play, but we are not yet sure exactly what role they have." Dr. Smith continues, "It is interesting to note that some types of arthritis, such as gout, are found to be more prevalent in men—

indicating that the presence of estrogen in women, in this situation, may have a protective effect."

In other cases, however, estrogen has been associated with increased incidence of inflammation. In pregnant women who have lupus, hormones such as estrogen and prolactin [a peptide hormone associated with breastfeeding] have been associated with making symptoms worse. On the other hand, pregnancy has been found to temporarily, dramatically reduce symptoms for many women with RA. Clearly the role of hormones in arthritis is controversial, and it is likely to be a focus of more research in the future.

Finding ways to cope with arthritis is particularly important for women, who are often juggling work, family, caretaking, and a variety of social responsibilities. With all of these challenges, it is important for women with arthritis to be sure to take the time to care for themselves and stay positive. Dr. Smith explains, "Although arthritis can be debilitating, it is so important that women try to maintain an optimistic outlook about their future. Focus on what you can do instead of letting the disease immobilize you—this will help you to maintain a more positive attitude, which will ultimately help in dealing with the pain." A good way to accomplish this is to enroll

in one of the Arthritis Foundation disease management courses such as the *Arthritis Foundation Self Help Program* or the *Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program*. In addition to these organized activities, it is also important to educate yourself about your condition and be aware of the often strong connection between the mind and body. Although each woman may have a different 'anecdote' for coping with their arthritis—the goals are often the same: try to relieve any excess amounts of stress and, ultimately, aim to reduce pain and improve function.

Although there is no consensus on *why* women experience arthritis more than men, Dr. Smith encourages women to help manage their arthritis and related conditions by:

- **Maintaining a good relationship with your physician**—open communication and compliance with physician recommendations are critical in the treatment of arthritis.
- **Exercising regularly**—the key to reducing your pain is to keep moving!
- **Educating yourself** about any new research, treatments, and prevention strategies for your arthritis.
- **Maintaining a healthy weight.** This is important for all-around good health.

(Continued on page 2)

Pfizer Renews Partnership

Pfizer Inc and the New York Chapter have renewed their partnership to continue providing vital services to residents in our region. This renewal will mark the 12th year that Pfizer has sponsored the **New York Arthritis Exchange™**. This telephone helpline is key to providing arthritis education and patient services to those in need.

Pfizer continues to support the Chapter's advocacy efforts by sponsoring the *Arthritis Advocates in Action* program, which is key to promoting our legislative agenda at the city, state and federal level.

This issue is underwritten by an educational grant from Wyeth.

Advocacy Update



Don't miss your chance to participate in the Chapter's eighth *Arthritis Advocates in Action* Training Session, sponsored by **Pfizer Inc**, to be held at the New York Chapter office, 122 East 42nd Street, 18th Floor, on Thursday, December 6th at 5:30pm.

This training is an excellent opportunity to learn about different ways to get involved in arthritis advocacy on the city, state and federal level. This year, the training will include an update on the New York State and New York City capacity building initiatives as well as a presentation from Amy Melnick, Chief Public Policy Officer of the National Office of the Arthritis Foundation, who will discuss the new Arthritis Ambassadors program. We will also hear some personal stories from a few individuals who are active members of the Chapter's advocacy program. The agenda includes:

AGENDA

- 5:30 – 6:00 PM** **Registration & Light Dinner**
- 6:00 – 6:15 PM** **Welcome/Overview of New York Chapter Advocacy Program**
Sara B. Kramer, M.D.
Chair, NY Chapter Government Affairs Committee
- 6:15 – 6:45 PM** **Update on NYC and NYS Capacity Building Initiatives**
Victoria Rizzo, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor at Columbia University and
Program Evaluation Consultant
- 6:45 – 7:15 PM** **Arthritis Foundation Advocacy Priorities-
Making Your Voice Heard in Washington!**
Amy Melnick
Chief Public Policy Officer, Arthritis Foundation National Office
- 7:15 – 7:30 PM** **Arthritis Advocates in Action: Advocates' Perspectives**
Lauren Fable
Samantha & Savannah Rafferty
- 7:30 – 8:00 PM** **Grassroots Advocacy Workshop**
Cynthia Dames, Public Policy Consultant
- 8:00 PM** **Closing: How You Can Help**

For more information on the Advocacy Training or to register, please contact the Chapter at 212-984-8730 or mgreco@arthritis.org.



Women's Health Summit

This winter, the Chapter is thrilled to present the first *Women's Health Summit for Arthritis* on Monday, December 3rd from 5:00PM-9:00PM at the Lighthouse International Conference Center, The Sol and Lillian Goldman Building on 111 East 59th Street.

Sponsored by **Abbott**, the Summit will include presentations about the many different challenges faced by women with arthritis. Topics to be covered:

- Overview of the different types of arthritis that impact women
- Coping strategies
- Information about the latest arthritis medications
- Tips on improving quality of sleep
- Strategies on how to balance life in and out of the workplace

In addition to these topics, participants will hear from women who have had their own personal struggles with arthritis and learn about the ways in which these women have overcome these challenges.

For more information on the *Women's Health Summit*, please contact the **New York Arthritis Exchange™** at 212-984-8730 or from the 914 or 845 area codes only, 800-246-2884.

Women and Arthritis (continued from page 1)

- **Getting in touch with the Arthritis Foundation**—they have so many great resources for you, from disease management programs, to public education opportunities and free literature!

For more information or for a copy of one of our free publications call the **New York Arthritis Exchange™** sponsored by **Pfizer**

at 212-984-8730, or from the 914 or 845 area codes only, 800-246-2884.

Bench to Bedside

On November 27th, the Chapter will be conducting the next program in our *Bench to Bedside* professional education series—*Update on Osteoarthritis: From Bench to Bedside*. The symposium, sponsored by **sanofi aventis**, targets rheumatologists and primary care physicians. This event will be held at the New York Chapter office from 5:00 PM- 7:30 PM.



Steven B. Abramson, M.D., Director of Rheumatology and Vice Dean for Education, Faculty and Academic Affairs at NYU Medical Center, is serving as course director. Presentations will be given by Steven Goldring, M.D., Chief Scientific Officer at the Hospital for Special Surgery, and Marc C. Hochberg, M.D., M.P.H., Professor of Medicine and Head of the Division of Rheumatology and Clinical Immunology at the University of Maryland School of Medicine.

For additional information or to receive an invitation to this program, please contact the Chapter at 212-984-8730 or mgreco@arthritis.org.

NEW YORK CHAPTER



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www.arthritis.org

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Copies of our financial and operating report have been filed with the state and are available upon request. To obtain one, write: Office of the Attorney General, Department of Law, Charities Bureau, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271, or contact us at the address above.

Questions and Answers

Dr. Jenny Diep, Clinical Instructor in the Division of Rheumatology at Mount Sinai Medical Center.

Q: What is osteoporosis? How is it diagnosed?

A: Osteoporosis is a disease that causes bones to weaken and become less dense. Although it is known to be asymptomatic, this disease can lead to loss of height and can increase the risk of fractures or broken bones. Often, osteoporosis goes undetected until these fractures occur. To avoid this, it is important that women who are post-menopausal, have had a previous low impact fracture, or have a family history of osteoporosis speak to their doctor and have a complete work up. The doctor will likely recommend that the patient obtain a dual energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA), a tool to diagnose osteoporosis that can measure even small losses of bone density.



Q: You specifically mentioned women, why is that?

A: Although both men and women get osteoporosis, it is a disease that affects primarily women. One of the most important theories about this gender difference involves estrogen, a female sex hormone that plays a critical role in protecting bones. During and after menopause, women develop a decline in their estrogen levels, which causes them to lose bone mass at a faster rate. Although men also lose bone mass as they age, it is usually a much slower process, unless they have other risk factors.

Other populations at risk include: males with low testosterone levels, people of Caucasian or Asian descent, those with a low intake of calcium and vitamin D-rich foods, people with thin or small frames, those who use medications that may have a negative impact on bone mass (such as cortisone), and people who have a history of bone fractures.

Q: What are some of the treatments for osteoporosis?

A: I always tell my patients with osteoporosis to begin by increasing their levels

of calcium and vitamin D. Most adults need 1,200 to 1,500 mg of calcium and 400 to 800 International Units of vitamin D per day. As for medications, there are a number of different types that are available. Bisphosphonates are the most commonly used treatment because they can potentially slow down the progression of bone loss, and may improve bone density and bone strength. Other treatments include Teriparatide, which is an injectable form of parathyroid hormone that may stimulate bone formation; and Calcitonin, which may decrease

bone breakdown. Each of these medications must be taken differently (either orally, subcutaneous injection or intravenously). For instance, the FDA recently approved zoledronic acid, which is a type of bisphosphonate that requires an annual intravenous infusion, rather than a daily or weekly dosing regimen. With all of these variations, it is important to speak to your doctor about which type of medication is right for you, as treatment decisions are individually based.

Q: Are there any ways to prevent osteoporosis?

A: One of the most important ways to prevent this disease is by participating in weight bearing exercises. This can not only improve bone density, but can also help build muscle strength and increase endurance—both of which can directly help prevent falls. It is also important to maintain a well-balanced diet with calcium and vitamin D-rich foods, avoid smoking and excessive alcohol use.

Q: Is there a key message that you think people should know about osteoporosis?

A: Since osteoporosis is asymptomatic and many people don't know they have it until after a fall, education is critical! People must empower themselves by learning about age-appropriate bone density screening and the variety of different ways to treat this disease.

For more information or to request a copy of our free brochure, *Osteoporosis*, call the **New York Arthritis Exchange™**, sponsored by **Pfizer Inc.**, at 212-984-8730, or, from the 914 or 845 area codes only, (800) 246-2884.

Kids Get Arthritis Too!

On November 17, 2007, the Chapter held the 3rd annual *Kids Get Arthritis Too Family Day* at the Bishop Ford Catholic High School in Brooklyn. Sponsored by **Amgen**, this program was multi-tiered, with specific sessions targeting parents, children and teens. In addition to fun activities for children, families were given the opportunity to learn from medical professionals and each other about topics such as Medications, Nutrition and Managing Your Child's Pain.



Upcoming Kids Programs:

This spring, the Arthritis Foundation, New York Chapter will be hosting two fun and educational events for children with arthritis and their families:

- **An Afternoon at Chelsea Piers:** This is an action-packed afternoon of age-appropriate activities for children with arthritis, ages 5 to 16. Parents will get an update from health specialists on the latest in research advances and treatments, exercise and nutrition guidelines for their children with arthritis. Chelsea Piers is located at 23rd Street and Hudson River Park in Manhattan.
- **Family Day at the Castle:** Similar to the Chelsea Piers event, this program will have fun activities for children with arthritis and educational opportunities for their parents. The Castle Fun Center is located on Route 17m in Chester, New York.

Save the Date:

The National Juvenile Arthritis Conference, *Cruisin' For A Cure*, will be held on July 10-13, 2008 in Costa Mesa, California. Look for more details in the spring edition of the *New York Arthritis Reporter*.

For more information on programs for children, please contact the **New York Arthritis Exchange™** at 212-984-8730, or from the 914 or 845 area codes only, 800-246-2884.

FREE Arthritis Foundation Self-Help, Tai Chi from the Arthritis Foundation, and Arthritis Foundation Exercise Programs for GHI Subscribers

Pre-registration required, contact Cathy Hogstrom at (212) 984-8713 for locations in our Chapter region.

Visit Our Thrift Shop

Arthritis Foundation Thrift Shop
1383 Third Avenue • New York, NY 10075
(212) 772-8816

Donations always welcome.

John M. Grotheer remembered the Chapter in his will with a bequest of \$4,557.

The estate of Paul Morris made a bequest to the Chapter of \$67,033.



2007 New York Chapter Research Awardees received their certificates from former Medical and Scientific Committee Chair, Michael Pillinger, MD., at the Klemperer event.

20th Paul Klemperer Award and Lecture Program

On October 11th, the New York Chapter of the Arthritis Foundation and the New York Academy of Medicine co-hosted the 20th **Paul Klemperer Award and Lecture** program to celebrate research accomplishments in the Chapter region. The evening honored some of the best and brightest researchers who have been funded by the Chapter to study new causes, treatments and potential cures for arthritis.

This year, the *Paul Klemperer, MD Award & Medal* was presented to Peter K. Gregerson, MD. Dr. Gregerson is well-known for his impressive research career, which has focused on the genetic basis of human autoimmunity with a special emphasis on rheumatoid arthritis. He has built a major research program in the genetics of autoimmunity, and now directs the Robert S. Boas Center for Genomics and Human Genetics at the Feinstein Institute for Medical Research in Long Island. Dr. Gregerson presented a lecture on "Rheumatoid Arthritis in the Genomic Era: Cracking the Code for Clues to Pathogenesis."

In addition to Dr. Gregerson's lecture, podium presentations were given by four young investigators sponsored by the Chapter. Presenters included George D. Kalliolias, M.D. (*A comparative study of the role of STATs and IL-10 in rheumatoid and seronegative arthritis*) and Theresa Lu, M.D. (*Regulation of lymph node vascular growth*) from the Hospital for Special Surgery, Meggan Mackay, M.D. (*Novel mechanism for cognitive dysfunction in SLE*) from North Shore LIJ Health System and Elena Peeva, M.D. (*Roloxifene as a modulator of B Cell function in murine lupus*) from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. Each presenter discussed his or her individual research and contributions to the field of rheumatology.

Upcoming Programs

Treatment Options for Rheumatoid Arthritis

November 27, 2007

1:00 - 2:00PM

Northern Westchester Hospital
Conference Room B

400 East Main Street, Mount Kisco, NY 10549

Sponsored by **Centocor**

Treatment Options for Osteoarthritis

November 28, 2007

10:30 - 11:30 AM

Castle Hill Senior Center

625 Castle Hill Ave., Bronx, N. Y. 10473

Sponsored by **Genzyme**

Yoga for Arthritis

This is an eight week disease management program that meets on the following dates: 12/5, 12/12, 12/19, 1/9, 1/16, 1/23, 1/20, 2/06

Arthritis Foundation, New York Chapter Office
122 East 42nd Street, 18th Floor
New York, NY 10168

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED

To register for this program, please contact Cathy Hogstrom at 212-984-8713 or chogstrom@arthritis.org

Programs require pre-registration. For further information, call the **New York Arthritis Exchange™** at 212-984-8730 or, from the 914 and 845 area codes only, 800-246-2884.

A distribution of \$6,246 from the estate of Jayne D. Franklin will support programs for people with arthritis.

A distribution of \$33,777 from the estate of Grace F. Lamb Trust will support arthritis research.

Dates to Remember

November 19, 2007

Causes and Prevention of Shoulder Injuries

7:00 PM-8:00 PM

Physical Therapy at Briarcliff

584 N State Road

Briarcliff Manor, NY 10510

Call for more information - 914-762-2222

December 7, 2007

Non Surgical Treatment Options for Arthritic Knees

Noon- 1:00 PM

Metro Sportsmed

380 Second Avenue (East 22nd)

New York, NY 10010

February 4, 2008

Arthritis and the Aging Spine

Noon- 1:00 PM

Metro Sportsmed

380 Second Avenue (East 22nd)

New York, NY 10010

**Ongoing: First Wednesday of each month
Fibromyalgia Support Group**

5:30 PM - 6:30 PM

Physical Therapy at Briarcliff

Call 914-762-2222 x 2121 to register

**Ongoing: Third Thursday of every month
Chronic Pain/Fibromyalgia Support Group**

1:00 PM- 2:00 PM

Physical Therapy of Jefferson Valley Office

Call 914-245-8807 x 1125 to register

Programs require pre-registration. For further information, call the **New York Arthritis Exchange™** at (212) 984-8730 or, from the 914 and 845 area codes only, 800-246-2884.

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Log on to www.arthritis.org. Enter your zip code to find the New York Chapter.

Kathleen George remembered the Chapter in her will with a bequest of \$500.

**In the Next Issue:
Nutrition and Arthritis**