

Manage the pain  
Know the over-the-counter  
options available

Procedures  
Advancements in  
orthopedic technology

Bone essentials  
Get more vitamin D  
and calcium

**MEDIA  
PLANET**

November 2010

# BONES & JOINTS

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TIPS

## FIGHT BACK AGAINST RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS

Meredith Boyd, Georgia beauty queen,  
is taking a stand against arthritis

PHOTO: MATT BOYD

Dive Back into an  
**Active Lifestyle**



**If you suffer from osteoarthritis, you know how painful it can be.**

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## CHALLENGES

**Question:** What are the differences between rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis?

**Answer:** Rheumatoid arthritis is an autoimmune disease resulting in swollen joints, while osteoarthritis results from wear and tear on the joints.

# Understanding the differences

If you wake up with stiff hands and feet every morning, you may be one of the 1.3 million American adults who have chronic inflammation and joint swelling from rheumatoid arthritis. Another 27 million Americans have osteoarthritis, a degenerative joint disease.

While rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis are both painful, they are actually quite different. Understanding these dissimilarities can help patients take control of their health.

## Rheumatoid Arthritis

According to the Arthritis Foundation, rheumatoid arthritis is caused by an “abnormality in the body’s immune system” which can lead to inflammation in joint linings and internal organs.

“Rheumatoid arthritis is inflammatory,” says Dr. Joseph M. Lane, attending Orthopaedic Surgeon at the

Hospital for Special Surgery in New York City. “That’s an autoimmune disease where the patient attacks its own tissue.”

The disease, which can affect the whole body, often targets hands, wrists, and fingers.

Rheumatoid arthritis is more common in women than men at a ratio of 2.5 to one, but why is unknown. Even children can get rheumatoid arthritis.

## Osteoarthritis

The Arthritis Foundation says osteoarthritis is the most common form of arthritis. Symptoms include joint pain, swelling, and stiffness.

Osteoarthritis is common in older patients and like rheumatoid arthritis, more women tend to get osteoarthritis than men.

“It’s malalignment,” says Dr. Lane. “It’s abnormal stress and load on the



**Joseph Lane, M.D.**  
Attending Orthopaedic Surgeon,  
Hospital for Special Surgery  
Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery,  
Weill Cornell Medical College



“Rheumatoid arthritis is more common in women than men at a ratio of 2.5 to one, but why is unknown. Even children can get rheumatoid arthritis.”

joints that wear on alignment”

For example, knees often develop osteoarthritis and wear out over time from bearing the body’s weight. Another example? People who use their hands a lot such as knitters can develop “knobs” in their fingers.

Osteoarthritis has excess bone, sclerosis and doesn’t have “bogginess,” while rheumatoid arthritis has osteoporosis, bogginess and swelling within the joints.

Dr. Lane says doctors can easily spot the differences between osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis, even though the distinction might be tough for patients.

Spotting these distinctions through early diagnosis can help patients and their doctors determine treatment.

**KRISTEN CASTILLO**

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## WE RECOMMEND



**Meredith Boyd**  
See how Meredith is taking a stand in the fight against RA.

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“A little motivation and spark to get through the next day is pure medicine by itself.”

## MEDIA PLANET

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1 Independent human clinical study (Los Angeles, 2008).

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INSIGHT

**Question:** What is osteoporosis?

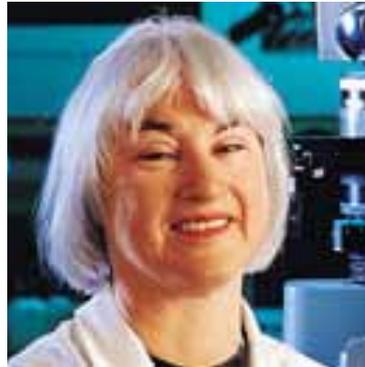
**Answer:** Osteoporosis is a disease that weakens bones and can cause them to break.



# Protect bones and prevent breaks

**For many people, a bone can break without a traumatic accident or a fall.**

That's because 44 million Americans have osteoporosis, a bone disease that weakens bones so much they can break during the most routine activity like sneezing, according to the National Osteoporosis Foundation (NOF.)



“Fracture is a way osteoporosis really gets diagnosed. People could be walking around losing bone and they don't know it.”

**Adele Boskey, PhD**  
Starr Chair, Mineralized Tissue Research, Hospital for Special Surgery Professor, Biochemistry, Weill Medical College of Cornell University

**Defining osteoporosis**

With osteoporosis, which is known as “porous bone,” the body has low bone mass and deteriorating bone tissue, which makes a person more susceptible to bone fractures.

Osteoporosis occurs in women, men and some juveniles. While any bone can be affected, osteoporosis often targets hips, vertebrae and wrists.

“In a normal person, you make bone, you remodel that bone to keep it active and responsive to the body's needs and you make new bone—so there's a balance, like a see-saw,” says Adele Boskey PhD, who studies Mineralization Mechanisms at the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York City. “But in osteoporosis, that balance is lost and you tend to lose much more bone

than you make.”

**Diagnosing bone disease**

Often osteoporosis patients don't know they have the disease.

“Fracture is a way osteoporosis really gets diagnosed,” she says, noting that it is a silent disease. “People could be walking around losing bone and they don't know it.”

The NOF reports, “Nearly half of

all women older than 50 will break a bone because of osteoporosis. An estimated one in four men will too.”

With traumatic fractures like those sustained in an accident, bones may break, but fragility fractures sometimes just happen.

“The bone doesn't have enough structure to support whatever motion you make and then all of a sudden there's a fracture. Then you go to the doctor, they do an x-ray and say ‘oh, you have osteoporosis,’” says Boskey.

Bone density tests can help determine a patient's risk for osteoporosis. Boskey recommends patients discuss osteoporosis concerns with their doctors to determine if treatment is needed.

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TIPS

**Eat calcium-rich foods**

1 In addition to dairy products, choose fish with bones (such as salmon or sardines) or dark leafy greens, all great sources of calcium.

**Start weight-bearing exercise**

2 For bone strength and new bone formation, try weight lifting plus exercise which “load” or compress your bones.

**Avoid smoking or drinking in excess**

3 Smoking cigarettes and excessive drinking has shown to lead to loss of bone density.

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NEWS

TIP  
**3**  
 CONSIDER MEDICAL FACILITIES WITH SOLID REPUTATIONS

**Question:** What should a patient consider when finding an orthopedic practice?

**Answer:** Patients should look for experienced, successful surgeons who perform surgeries at reputable medical facilities.

# Choose your orthopedic practice

**Whether you have knee problems, arthritis or another bone or joint concern, you need to find the right medical practice to handle your orthopedic health.**

**Experience and success rates**

Get started by researching doctors and practices online. Then

schedule appointments to meet the surgeon and the staff. These appointments are usually free and help you get to know the doctor and his qualifications.

You want a doctor who you like and feel comfortable with. The surgeon also needs to be board certified in orthopedic surgery, meaning she has advanced education and training in orthopedics.

Always ask about the doctor's experience in orthopedics as well as his or her success rates performing surgeries. You can check the doctor's overall record including license history and complaints on the California Medical Board's website: [www.medbd.ca.gov](http://www.medbd.ca.gov).

**Advances in technology**

Orthopedic surgery is getting a

lot easier thanks to technology. With computer-assisted surgery, surgeons can operate on patients with great accuracy through small incisions. Patients appreciate the precision and are happy with smaller scars.

**Get educated**

Consider medical facilities that have solid reputations for performing many orthopedic proce-

dures each year. Look for facilities that have special programs with staff educated in orthopedic procedures. These programs benefit patients and the surgeon because they keep everyone informed and comfortable.

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