Margaret, 74
Teaching associate, former carer & mother-to-one at risk of re-fracture, BRISBANE

Mother-to-one adult child, Margaret, 74, Brisbane is employed as a teaching associate by the University of Queensland and Bond University. She teaches at the Mater Hospital, educating second year medical students about women’s health and communications. Up until recently, she also cared for her husband of 75 years, who has been living with Alzheimer’s for five years.

Although Margaret has no known family history of fractures, she is no stranger to broken bones.

In 2005, she slipped “on the front stairs at home” and broke her wrist – a serious break that saw her plaster cast-bound for five weeks, followed by an additional six weeks of rehabilitation.

Then one evening in January this year, Margaret was in the kitchen putting item in fridge when she slipped and fell on the cold, hard tiles. Having hurt herself badly, and completely immobilised, Margaret remained on the kitchen floor for four long hours until her husband woke up and found the phone for me to use as I couldn’t move from the floor. After contacting an ambulance, Margaret soon learned she had broken her hip and would be out of action for two months.

Together with her husband, Margaret was transported by ambulance to Princess Alexandra Hospital where she underwent emergency hip replacement surgery the following morning. During her three week long stay in hospital, Margaret was referred for a bone mineral density (BMD) test, after which she was subsequently diagnosed with osteoporosis and prescribed appropriate treatment.

This is Margaret’s story.

“I never thought my bones would prove problematic later in life,” said Margaret.

“I was surprised to be diagnosed with osteoporosis, because I’ve always led a healthy, active life. I was even part of a gardening group. So having a hip replacement was a life-changing event.”

After a three week stay in hospital to repair her fractured hip, Margaret commenced a rigorous rehabilitation and physiotherapy program for the ensuing 10 weeks. During this period, she remained steadfastly committed to following her physiotherapist’s instructions to help speed her recovery.

At this time however, her husband was placed into care, for Margaret was unable to care for both herself and her husband with special needs. To this day, he remains in care.

“I went through a very difficult time after breaking my hip, but I was determined to recover and return to work,” Margaret said.
Margaret is a strong advocate for the new SOS Fracture Alliance – Australia’s only national alliance of medical, paramedical, patient and consumer organisations focusing on the prevention of osteoporotic fractures.

“Bone health is so important and many of us tend to be ambivalent about it. But we all need to be more vigilant,” said Margaret.

Margaret encourages people at risk of fractures and osteoporosis, to talk to their doctor and to request a BMD test.

Nowadays, Margaret’s bone health is being effectively monitored and treated by the staff in the Endocrine Unit at Princess Alexandra Hospital.

ends#

To organise an interview with Margaret, please contact Kirsten Bruce or John Wanna at VIVA! Communications on 0401 717 566 / 0430 302 822.