

Strong Bones

Chaves County Cooperative Extension Service



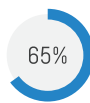
THE SITUATION:

Osteoporosis is a disease which makes bones weak and fragile. This greatly increases the risk of breaking a bone even after a minor fall or bump. The disease has no obvious symptoms, so many people don't know they have osteoporosis until they suffer a fracture. Fractures can be life-altering, causing pain, disability and loss of independence. That's why it's important to prevent osteoporosis! According to the International Osteoporosis Foundation Osteoporosis and low bone mass are currently estimated to be a major public health threat for almost 54 million U.S. women and men aged 50 and older. Among the 54 million, 10.2 million adults are estimated to have osteoporosis, of which more than 80% were women. Economic burden was estimated at 17 billion USD in 2005. In a study based on almost 380,000 fractures in female Medicare beneficiaries, 10% had another fracture within 1 year, 18% within 2 years, and 31% within 5 years

EXTENSION RESPONSE:

Strong Bones is an exercise program developed to teach older adults aerobic exercises designed to strengthen muscles, increase bone density and improve balance. This allows participants the opportunity to get moderate exercise and lower the possibility of injury. Family and Consumer Sciences Agent Tamara Schubert, teaches class once a week at Senior Circle and coordinates with volunteers to hold classes twice a week at two other locations (Grace Community Church and Bethel Baptist). On average there are five Strong Bones classes taking place each week with an estimated total of ~250 classes a year.

IMPACTS: While the majority of the participants joined Strong Bones for the exercise, fellowship, and to build strength, participants reported feeling better over all with many reporting less physical and joint pain.



65% Participants reported having better balance and being more flexible as a result of participating in the program.



One participant said "My legs and arms are much stronger and I am able to do all of my household chores on my own and my yard work".



Several participants reported better bone density results and were able to avoid surgeries due to their participation in the program.

When asked why participants would encourage someone to join a Strong Bones program, one participant responded "It's a great program. It keeps you moving and encouraged. Great teacher and great people. The design and exercises are not over bearing."

PUBLIC VALUE STATEMENT:

REDUCING THE RISK OF OSTEOPOROSIS AND FALLS CAN INCREASE OLDER ADULTS' QUALITY OF LIFE AND SAVE THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS IN HEALTH CARE AND LONG TERM CARE COSTS FOR NEW MEXICANS.



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