

Bernice's Story:

Both of my parents had strokes. All of my siblings have had transient ischemic attacks (TIAs or "mini strokes"). And I have had TIAs.

My brother and both of my sisters have had or now have osteoporosis. My brother and one of my sisters are no longer alive. My sister and I are both being treated with Fosamax. We have told our children to take extra calcium so they don't have fractured vertebrae as my brother and sister have had. I have also told them to have bone scans.

How this has impacted my life: I am deathly afraid of having a fracture of my vertebrae. My youngest grandchild is five years old and I have yet to pick her up off the floor. When she was a baby, I allowed her parents to put her in my lap for a few minutes but I was afraid to change position so only was able to enjoy her for a short time. My other grandchildren know they can't climb onto my lap.

Because my first TIA affected the way I walk, my ability to walk has deteriorated slowly since 1992. I started using a cane then graduated to a walker, which I still use. I use a wheelchair occasionally as well, but luckily, not regularly.