



Catch-a-Break

Preventing fractures by helping at-risk Albertans improve bone health

Our challenge	Results to date	
<p>1 in 3 women and 1 in 5 men will suffer an osteoporotic fracture in their lifetime</p> <hr/> <p>Osteoporosis causes 70% to 90% of the 30,000 hip fractures each year in Canada²</p>	<p>↑ 3,000 hip fractures each year in Alberta</p> <p>By 2030, the number of hip fractures is expected to ↑ quadruple</p> <hr/> <p>28% of women and 37% of men who suffer a hip fracture die within one year</p>	<p>For every 10,000 patients screened, the program is estimated to have helped prevent 14 fractures including 4 hip fractures</p> <hr/> <p>Each hip fracture represents nearly \$38,000 in health system costs avoided¹</p>

What was the issue?

Osteoporosis causes 70% to 90% of hip fractures in Canada, and hip fractures can be deadly for the frail and elderly. When someone breaks a bone because of osteoporosis, it's important they receive follow-up care to prevent another fracture. Improving bone health and reducing secondary fractures in those at highest risk—especially people who have experienced a recent fracture—is critical.

Until recently, less than 20% of Albertans treated for a fracture related to poor bone health received the follow-up osteoporosis care they needed to prevent a future fracture.

What we did to address it

The Catch-a-Break program began in 2014 as a way to address this gap in care and prevent hip fractures and other common fractures (e.g., wrist, arm, rib or pelvis) in at-risk patients. The program is designed to identify people who have experienced a fragility-related fracture and help them improve bone health and prevent future fractures, including hip fractures. The program started in Edmonton and expanded to the rest of Alberta after only six months.

Catch-a-Break focuses on improving communication between individuals and their family doctors about osteoporosis and available treatment options. It uses existing resources (such as Health Link) to initiate follow-up communication with patients and provides important information about bone health, osteoporosis, diet, calcium and vitamin D, and other beneficial supplements and medications.

Catch-a-Break is a partnership between the Bone and Joint Health SCN and Health Link. It's also supported by the STOP-Fracture research team and the Alberta Bone and Joint Health Institute.

How this work is making a difference

With Catch-a-Break, Albertans at highest risk of osteoporosis and poor bone health are proactively contacted by Health Link. The program equips people with information they can use to follow-up with their physician, improve their bone health and help prevent additional fractures. These actions can significantly improve patients' long-term health, mobility and quality of life.

Evaluations show that Catch-a-Break participants increase their daily use of calcium (to 68% from 47%) and vitamin D (to 78% from 63%), which are both essential nutrients for good bone health.

On a system-level, the program benefits all Albertans by offsetting the upstream impact of this condition. It is helping reduce emergency and urgent care visits, surgical wait times for fracture care, hospitalization and rehabilitation rates, and associated healthcare costs. In 2018, due to the cost-effectiveness and value of this preventative service, the Catch-a-Break program became a permanent service that's offered province-wide.

What's next?

Now that Catch-a-Break has been operationalized across the province, we expect to see an overall decline in the rates of fractures associated with poor bone health in Alberta, despite an aging population.

Partnering with Primary Care Networks, educating staff at cast clinics, and developing educational resources for patients, families and healthcare providers will all help raise awareness about bone health and fracture prevention. Catch-a-Break is an important component of the network's Bone Health Management Program. Other components include evidence-based best practices for fracture care, Fracture Liaison Services, and restorative care.

Catch-a-Break: How does it work?

- Patients who have had a fracture that could be associated with osteoporosis are identified, based on information from emergency departments and cast clinics.
- Patients who are 50 years of age and older who have had a recent bone fracture are mailed information about bone health and osteoporosis. If patients consent, a letter is also sent to their primary care doctor to inform them of Health Link's interaction with their patient.
- Health Link staff follow up with a phone call to encourage these patients to talk to their doctor about their bone health and determine if underlying bone weakness may have contributed to their fracture.
- Additional follow-up calls are scheduled at three and 12 months.

To learn more, visit www.ahs.ca/bjhscn