

# Project Healthy Bones for Epilepsy: A Research and Wellness Program

Project Healthy Bones (PHB) is a 24 week exercise and education program for older men and women who have osteoporosis or are at risk of developing the condition. It is based on Tufts University Research that shows strength training exercises helps preserve bone density. PHB was developed by the NJ Department of Health and Senior Services alongside physical therapists specializing in osteoporosis. Professor Mary Wagner has initiated a Project Healthy Bones class to meet once a week, specifically tailored to patients with epilepsy.

In a previous study, Dr. Wagner found that 50% of patients with epilepsy at the Robert Wood Johnson Epilepsy Clinic have abnormally low bone mineral density at an early age. Patients with epilepsy have a two to six fold increase in the occurrence of fractures compared to the general population. Many medications that patients with epilepsy take chronically can also cause a loss of bone density and increase the risk of getting osteoporosis. We aim to use the exercise and educational aspects of the class to help gradually improve behavior that is bone protective.

The educational component focuses on nutrition, safety, medications, and lifestyle factors that promote bone health. The class is interactive, with peer leaders facilitating an exchange of information. It supports a wellness focus and the idea that self-esteem, peer support, and gradual successes will change behavior. The exercise component is designed to improve posture, balance, flexibility and strength. Participants use hand weights and ankle weights, and gradually increase weight throughout the program.

Extensive research documents that regular exercise improves muscle strength, balance, and bone mass. Muscle strength also plays a major role in balance and mobility. Deficits in leg strength are linked to reduced balance and difficulty with every day actions such as the ability to rise from a chair, climb stairs and walk.

For more information on Project Healthy Bones please visit the Department of Human Services Website URL: <http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/doas/home/project.html>

Our program's sessions will be on **Fridays** from **6:00-7:15 PM** at Robert Wood Johnson **Fitness Center**, in the Community Education Room. (Day and time may change based on best time for group)

**Address:**

100 Kirkpatrick Street, 2nd floor (Suite #201)  
New Brunswick, NJ 08901  
732-873-1222

**Parking:** Is Free! Entrance to the Wellness Plaza Parking Deck is on **Paterson Street between Joyce Kilmer and Kirk Patrick Street**

**Cost:** Class and materials are free. Participants should purchase their own weights.

**For more information, Contact:**

**Professor Mary Wagner**, Pharm.D. by Email: [mlwagner@pharmacy.rutgers.edu](mailto:mlwagner@pharmacy.rutgers.edu) or leave a message with Janice Weinstein at 848-445-6815

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