



# WOMEN'S HEALTH

## What 60 Looks Like Now

(NAPSA)—Today, older women are part of a new generation who are staying active. They are living their lives to the fullest, pursuing hobbies, traveling, spending time with family and enjoying good health. In fact, a new survey of 400 American women ages 60 to 69 revealed that more than half believe that their 60s are the best years of their lives or that the best years lie ahead.

Legendary performer Ann-Margret is one such woman. Ann-Margret just turned 60 this April. In partnership with The National Council on the Aging, she is serving as the spokesperson for “What 60 Looks Like Now”—a national campaign encouraging women 60 and older to remain active and independent by raising awareness about osteoporosis and the importance of bone density testing.

“I’ve seen the serious impact osteoporosis has had on some of my friends’ health and independence,” said Ann-Margret. “That’s why I went to my doctor and asked about a bone density test. I was lucky. I found out my bones are normal and that I don’t have osteoporosis.”

A bone density test is the most effective method of determining a woman’s risk for fracture and the presence of osteoporosis—a silent disease that weakens bones making them more prone to fracture. Several types of bone density tests are available that measure how dense bones are at different body sites. The points most commonly tested are the hips, spine and wrists. These sites commonly sustain osteoporosis-related fractures.

Despite the availability of bone



Photo Credit: Harry Langdon

### **Ann-Margret urges women 60 and older to talk to their doctor about getting a bone density test.**

density tests and Medicare coverage for eligible women over 65, only a relatively small number of women have been diagnosed and treated. The survey also revealed that of the 46 percent of women who have not gotten a bone density test, nearly 70 percent said no one ever suggested it to them as part of taking care of their health.

“Just as Ann-Margret has done, it’s vital that women be proactive and ask their doctor about their risk for osteoporosis and if a bone density test is right for them,” said William Sunshine, M.D., clinical assistant professor at the University of Miami School of Medicine and a private practice physician in Boca Raton, Florida. “This is particularly important for postmenopausal women because after menopause, women tend to lose bone rapidly. A bone density test is a

quick, painless and non-invasive way to check for the disease.”

According to the National Osteoporosis Foundation, osteoporosis and low bone mass affect an estimated 28 million Americans, 80 percent of them women. Each year, osteoporosis is associated with approximately 1.5 million fractures, including painful spinal fractures that over time can collapse the bones of the spine causing height loss and stooped posture. These fractures and their consequences can lead to feelings of helplessness, lack of confidence and loss of independence. In fact, the survey found that 72 percent of respondents said losing their ability to be physically active was their greatest fear; and 69 percent worried about becoming dependent on others.

“Over the years, dancing, performing and eating right all have helped me stay healthy,” said Ann-Margret. “But I also know that taking care of my health means taking care of my bones. That’s why I took a bone density test to make sure I didn’t have osteoporosis. It is a serious disease and women should talk with their doctor about a bone density test.”

Osteoporosis does not need to be an inevitable part of aging. Once a woman knows she is at risk, she and her doctor can discuss steps to prevent further bone loss and reduce fracture risk. For more information about osteoporosis and bone density testing, visit [www.bonedensitytest.com](http://www.bonedensitytest.com) or call 1-800-224-4042.