

## Kate, 65

### Retired school teacher & mother to two adult children who broke her left femur in two during an aerobics class, *SYDNEY*

Retired schooler teacher and mother to two adult children, Kate, 65, Sydney was diagnosed with osteoporosis in April 2017, after an accident during her twice weekly aerobics class, which saw her lose her footing and fall to the floor, subsequently splitting the top of her left femur in two.

Given she has no known family history of the silent disease, and, up until then, had been leading an active lifestyle, Kate was shocked to learn she was living with brittle bones.

This is Kate's story.



Kate was participating in her much-loved twice weekly aerobics class two months ago, when she spun around during a dance move, and caught her foot on the school hall's sticky floor. She subsequently fell hard and fractured her left femur (thigh bone).

"I was in severe pain. I knew I had broken my left leg," said Kate.

The ambulance transferred Kate to the emergency department of Concord Hospital, where she underwent a series of X-rays, and was administered morphine for the pain. Early the following morning, Kate underwent extensive surgery to repair her fractured leg.

"During surgery, the doctors made a seven centimetre incision in my left hip and two other, smaller incisions down my left leg, into which they inserted a big rod down the centre of my thigh bone which was fastened with a screw pin, to repair my broken femur.

"The team who operated on me were wonderful," Kate said.

Post- surgery, Kate was administered strong painkillers, to which she was unaccustomed, which allowed her to "push through the pain." I was in hospital for 6 days, learning how to walk again. It was tough and challenging.

Kate's recovery process has since involved physiotherapy as an outpatient, bone strengthening medication, "unconditional support" from her husband and a "positive outlook on life."

"Without my husband, my recovery process would have been incredibly hard.

With encouragement and support from my family and friends, I have since regained the necessary confidence to reclaim my life. I now look forward to returning to my much-loved hobbies of aerobics, knitting and volunteerism," Kate said.

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Nowadays, Kate is a strong advocate for the new SOS Fracture Alliance – Australia’s only national alliance of medical, allied health, patient and consumer organisations focusing on the prevention of osteoporotic fractures, to “make the first break the last.”

“Had I been to a bone mineral density clinic when I was going through menopause, and subsequently been diagnosed with brittle bones and prescribed appropriate medication, I could have saved the healthcare system thousands of dollars and resources.

“I support the new SOS Fracture Alliance because encouraging doctors to refer relevant patients for a bone mineral density test, particularly women who lose calcium during and after menopause, could prevent fractures,” said Kate.

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**To coordinate an interview with Kate, please contact Kirsten Bruce or John Wanna from VIVA! Communications on 0401 717 566 / 0430 302 822.**