

# MANAGING YOUR OSTEOPOROSIS

Guidelines, tips and resources to help  
you live better with Osteoporosis



A wellness publication prepared for members  
of Samaritan Health Plans and InterCommunity  
Health Network CCO

**OUR MEMBERS. OUR NEIGHBORS.**



About 9 million Americans have Osteoporosis and almost 48 million more have low bone density, putting them at increased risk for osteoporosis and broken bones.

## WHAT IS OSTEOPOROSIS?

Osteoporosis is a bone disease that causes bones to weaken, which can make them break easily. All through life your bones are losing old bone and building new bone. Osteoporosis can occur when the following happen:

- You lose too much bone
- You do not make enough new bone
- A combination of both

## WHAT CAN I DO TO MANAGE MY OSTEOPOROSIS?

Become an active participant in managing your osteoporosis to help strengthen your bones. Take a moment to review these six key elements to successful osteoporosis management:

### 1. Be physically active.

For people with osteoporosis, regular activity can reduce the chance of breaking a bone. Ask your health care provider to help you create an activity program that is right for you. Be sure to include activities from each of the following:

- **Weight-bearing activities** – any activity that uses the weight of your body to work the bones and muscles. For example, walking or dancing.
- **Muscle-strengthening activities** – any activity meant to increase strength in specific muscles. For example, lifting weights or using resistance bands.

Always talk with your health care provider before starting any new activities.

## 2. Eat a healthy diet.

Eating a well balanced, healthy diet is important for strong bones. Pay special attention to the following:

- **Calcium** and **vitamin D** work together to keep bones healthy. Calcium is used to build bone and vitamin D helps your body use calcium. Eat foods rich in calcium such as low-fat milk, cheese, and salmon. If you aren't able to get enough calcium and vitamin D in your diet, ask your health care provider if a supplement is right for you.
- **Fruits** and **vegetables** provide many minerals and vitamins that are important for bone health. Be sure you are eating plenty of them.
- **Sodium (salt)** can cause calcium loss. Try to limit added salt and processed foods.

## 3. Do not smoke.

If you smoke, try to quit. The chemicals and substances in cigarettes can be harmful to your bones. Smoking may also make it harder for your body to absorb calcium.

## 4. Limit alcohol use.

Heavy drinking can reduce bone building and negatively affect the body's calcium supply. Drinking too much can also put you at risk for falling and breaking a bone.

# YOUR TREATMENT PLAN

## 5. Follow your treatment plan.

Your osteoporosis treatment plan may include lifestyle changes and/or medication. Osteoporosis medications are used to slow down or stop bone loss. If you are taking an osteoporosis medication, take it as directed and do not stop unless your health care provider tells you to.

**What is your osteoporosis treatment plan?** Write it here. If you do not know your treatment plan, ask your health care provider.

### a.) My lifestyle changes

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### b.) My osteoporosis medications

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**6. Get the recommended follow-up bone density testing.**

The test for monitoring osteoporosis is a dual energy x-ray absorptiometry or DXA scan. This test measures the density of your bones. The lower your bone density, the higher risk you have for breaking a bone. Your health care provider may recommend follow-up DXA testing to monitor how well you are responding to treatment.

Ask your health care provider if you are unsure about the following questions:

**a.) What was the date of your last bone density test?**

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**b.) When should you have your next bone density test?**

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We have compiled a list of local resources that provide a variety of programs, classes and support groups. Some classes and programs may charge a fee. Those fees may be covered by your Samaritan health plan. Check your member handbook or call your plan for more information.

## **DISEASE/CHRONIC CONDITION PROGRAMS**

### **Living Well with Chronic Conditions**

Benton, Linn, and Lincoln Counties, 541-768-6070

Six-week workshop that teaches practical skills for living a healthy life with an ongoing health condition.

## **TOBACCO USE**

### **Oregon Quit Line**

1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669)

### **Spanish Language Line**

1-877-2NO-FUME (1-877-266-3863)

**[www.oregonquitline.org](http://www.oregonquitline.org)**

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