

Should You Get a Bone Density Screening?



Osteoporosis, or low bone density, contributes to more than 2 million fractures every year. There normally aren't any warning signs, which is why an osteoporosis screening — a painless test similar to an X-ray — is so important.

Many people aren't getting the osteoporosis screenings they need. Talk with your Primary Care Provider (PCP) to see if you qualify for a bone density screening.

MANY FALL SHORT ON BONE DENSITY SCREENINGS

A recent study was published in the Journal of General Internal Medicine. It found that about 40 percent of the women ages 60 to 65 who participated in the study were at high risk for osteoporosis and were not screened. But more than 45 percent of younger women were screened even though they didn't have any risk factors.

WHO NEEDS SCREENING?

The government recommends that all women ages 65 and older be screened for osteoporosis. Younger women at an increased risk for osteoporosis should also undergo screening. Men should be screened too, if they have risk factors. Again, talk with your PCP to see if you qualify.

Risk factors include:

- A family history of osteoporosis or fractures
- A previous high-risk bone fracture
- Alcohol abuse
- Glucocorticoid (steroid) use

SCREENINGS CAN SAVE LIVES

Every year, we send letters to our members reminding them to get certain recommended preventive screenings, such as mammograms, glaucoma tests, bone density screenings and colorectal cancer screenings. Preventive screenings like these can help detect diseases in their early stages when treatment works best.

One Member's Story

A member recently thanked us for reminding her that she needed a colorectal cancer screening. The member said that she scheduled a colonoscopy after getting our letter. During the colonoscopy, the doctor found growths called polyps and successfully removed them. Colorectal cancer often begins as a polyp, which may form on the inner wall of the colon or rectum. Some polyps can become cancerous over time. Finding and removing polyps can prevent colorectal cancer.

Stay on Track – Talk with Your PCP

Whether you receive a reminder from us or not, be sure to talk to your PCP about any preventive screenings that you may need to keep you at your healthiest. As your health care partner, we work hard to help you receive the care you need for a quality lifestyle. Many screenings are covered under your benefits. Our Customer Service team is here to answer any questions you might have about preventive screenings or your benefits. **Call Customer Service at 1-866-789-7747 (TTY 711) if you have additional questions.**