



# MyTru Advantage

Wellness Quarterly

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# Bone Density Testing

## What is a bone density scan?

A bone mineral density scan is done to check for weakening bones. It is often called a DEXA or DXA scan. A DXA scan tells doctors how dense the bones are and can identify the risk for fractures or further bone loss. The most common and accurate parts of the body to be scanned are the spine, hips, and wrist.

## There are 2 levels of bone loss:

- **Osteopenia** - the beginning of bone density loss. This is the earliest stage of weakening bones.
- **Osteoporosis** - more severe bone density loss. Bones become brittle and fragile. Broken bones from even minor falls are more likely to occur.



## Who should get a bone density scan?

The U.S. Preventative Task Force recommends all women over 65 years old and those under 65 at high risk should have the test. Some factors that put you at high risk are:



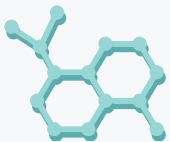
Losing 1.5 or more inches in height.



Having had a fragility fracture. This is a bone that breaks more easily than it should. Example: breaking a bone from coughing or sneezing.



Taking specific medications that cause the bone-rebuilding process to slow down. Example: long-term use of steroids such as Prednisone.



Experiencing a drop in hormone levels, such as at menopause or with some cancer treatments.

## What do I do to prepare?

- According to the Mayo Clinic, if you take calcium supplements, stop taking them for at least 24 hours before the scan.
- Wear comfortable clothing free of metal, such as zippers, grommets, or metal buttons. This is especially important for any pants you wear. Keep in mind, some testing centers may have you change into a gown, so this step isn't as important.



## What happens during the test?

- You will lie down on a platform, and the arm of the machine will be brought over the body part to be scanned. You may have to change positions part way through, depending on the testing center.
- There are no needles involved, and the test is completely non-invasive.
- The length of the test varies. It is common for density scans to take 10-30 minutes.

## Results - What do the numbers mean?

Your doctor will explain your results to you. The test has 2 different scores (T-score and Z-score). The T-score compares your bones' density to the expected values for a healthy young adult of the same sex. The Z-Score compares your bones to what is normal for someone your age, sex, weight, and race.

T-Score is the one you hear about the most. The numbers mean:

- -1 or below: bone density is normal.
- Between -1 and -2.5: this range indicates osteopenia (density is below normal but not yet osteoporosis.)
- -2.5 or below: indicates osteoporosis or weak bones.

### Sources:

- <https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/bone-density-test/about/pac-20385273>
- <https://familydoctor.org/condition/osteopenia/#:~:text=The%20lower%20your%20score%2C%20the,have%20a%20bone%20density%20test>

# Preventing Falls

No one plans on falling and getting injured, but the potential for falling increases as we age. The good news is that you can reduce your risk of falling and injury (and possible hospitalization and disability) by being aware of common causes of falls and following a few simple steps to prevent them from happening.

## Common Causes of Falls:

### Medical Causes

- Conditions that affect balance: diabetes, heart disease, low blood pressure, neuropathy
- Medications that cause dizziness or sleepiness
- Orthostatic hypotension: Brief dizziness when sitting or standing
- Lack of physical activity

### Environmental Causes

- Low lighting
- Loose throw rugs
- Extension cords across floors
- Slippery showers and tubs
- Ice on sidewalk and driveway
- Stairs

### Personal Health Causes

- Poor eyesight & hearing loss
- Decreased reflexes and muscle weakness
- Gait or foot problems that affect balance
- Unsafe shoes: poor fit, high heel, raised or loose sole
- Confusion in unfamiliar environments

## Steps you can take to prevent falls:



- Stay physically active
- Take a few minutes before getting out of bed and stand up slowly
- Limit amount of alcohol you drink
- Use assistive devices when walking (canes, walkers)
- Wear socks or slippers with rubber soles on stairs and non-carpeted floors
- Avoid or use caution on slippery surfaces
- Wear well fitting shoes & replace when worn.
- Do a home walkthrough: improve lighting, install handrails on stairs and in tubs/showers, secure rugs with nonslip pads or tape, move extension cords
- Let your provider know if a fall happens, even if no injury occurred
- Ask your provider about physical therapy for improving muscle strength and balance and using assistive devices.
- Get enough sleep
- Get regular eye & hearing checks
- Know your medication side effects

### Sources:

- <https://ncoa.org/article/debunking-the-myths-of-older-adult-falls>
- <https://www.ncoa.org/article/6-falls-prevention-steps-to-help-your-older-loved-ones>

# Mental Health in Older Adults

While moments of sadness, worry, and stress can be an occasional part of life, mental illness is not a normal part of aging.

Depression and anxiety occur more often than other mental health diagnoses. Experiencing depression or anxiety can make you feel out of control. You do not have to deal with these feelings alone. While reaching out to a health care provider is recommended, know that there are other resources available.

Consider talking with someone you trust and let them know how much you are struggling. Possible examples include a close friend, family member, or spiritual leader.

## Sources:

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/older-adults-and-mental-health>  
<https://medlineplus.gov/olderadultmentalhealth.html>  
<https://mhanational.org/depression-older-adults>  
<https://www.mhanational.org/anxiety-older-adults>  
<https://www.ncoa.org/article/anxiety-and-older-adults-a-guide-to-getting-the-relief-you-need>





## Depression:

The CDC states that “estimates of major depression in older people living in the community range from less than 1% to 5%”. When older people require home health care, that goes up to 13.5%. Older adults in the hospital experience depression at 11.5%.

### A few symptoms of depression include:

- Losing interest or enjoyment in activities
- Not sleeping normally/loss of energy
- Losing or gaining weight when not trying
- Problems maintaining concentration
- Difficulty making decisions
- Feeling worthless



There are many risk factors that can contribute to depression, including chronic medical conditions (especially those that include disability or physical decline), chronic pain, hearing or vision loss, and repeated falls. Loneliness from the loss of loved ones and friends also contributes.

If you find yourself having feelings of depression, talk to your primary healthcare provider. Treatment for depression is available. Both medications and therapy can help. MyTruAdvantage offers a telehealth mental health option for a \$25 copay.

## Anxiety:

According to the National Council on Aging, nearly 4% of older adults experience anxiety. Anxiety is defined as chronic excessive worry and/or always expecting the worst about life situations.



### Symptoms of anxiety can include:



Fatigue



Muscle Tightness



Nausea



Shakiness



Gastrointestinal Problems



Headache

There are many risk factors that can contribute to anxiety, including chronic medical conditions, general feelings of poor health, physical disabilities, sleep disturbances, medication side effects, and mixing or abusing alcohol and prescription medications. If you have any symptoms or are concerned you may have anxiety, talk to your primary care provider. There is treatment for anxiety, including counseling and medications.

**If you experience a mental health emergency, call or text the Suicide and Crisis Healthline at 988, or go to the nearest emergency room.**

# Contact Us

## Member Services:

Phone: 1-844-425-4280 (TTY: 711)

Email: [MemberServices@MyTruAdvantage.com](mailto:MemberServices@MyTruAdvantage.com)

- **October 1 – March 31: 7 days a week, 8:00am – 8:00pm, Local Time**

On Thanksgiving and Christmas Day, leave us a message and we'll return your call within 1 business day.

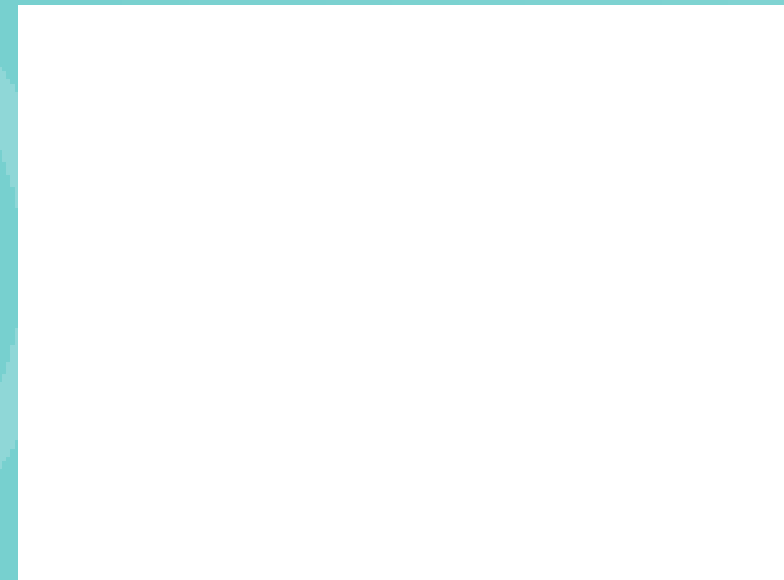
- **April 1 – September 30: Monday – Friday 8:00am – 8:00pm, Local Time**

On weekends and holidays, leave us a message and we'll return your call within 1 business day.



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[www.MyTruAdvantage.com](http://www.MyTruAdvantage.com)



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ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1.844.425.4280 (TTY: 711).

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