



### Can It be Treated?

Prescription medications are available to treat osteoporosis. Treatment depends on individual circumstances. There are several types of treatment available and talking to your doctor will be the best step in determining the course of treatment that is right for you.

### Highmark Can Help!

The information in this brochure is for educational purposes only. The content is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health care provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition. Please see your health benefit plan for information about covered services.



It's time to  
"Bone-Up" on Your Health.

### We have a Number of Free Resources for Highmark Members to Use

- **HOPE (Highmark Osteoporosis Prevention and Education Program)**

This take-action lifestyle improvement program focuses on making healthy choices to improve bone health and prevent or manage osteoporosis. Visit the Highmark website and find a HOPE program near you or call 1-800-879-2217. Website address is located on the back of your membership card.

- **BLUES ON CALL Nurse Health Coaches** are available 24/7 to provide one-on-one telephonic support for patients regarding general health topics. Please call 1-888-258-3428.



# Osteoporosis

Geriatric Resources

*Caring for Seniors*

# Osteoporosis Explained



## What is Osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis is a disease that makes bones weak, thin and easily fractured (broken). Symptoms include broken hip, spine and wrist bones, unexplained back pain, height loss, a humped back and limited movement.

## Am I at Risk?

Women have a higher risk of getting osteoporosis, but it is not just a women's disease. Of the 10 million Americans estimated to have osteoporosis, eight million are women and two million are men. Of the 10 million estimated to already have the disease, there are almost 34 million more estimated to have low bone density, placing them at increased risk for osteoporosis and broken bones.

## How do I know if I have Osteoporosis?

A bone mineral density (BMD) test is the best way to determine your bone health. BMD tests can identify osteoporosis, determine your risk for fractures and measure your response to treatment.

The most common and accurate way to test BMD is the DEXA test. It is painless, like having an x-ray, but with much less radiation exposure. A DEXA test measures your BMD and typically compares it to the peak BMD of a healthy 30-year-old adult to give you a "T-score." The lower your score, the higher your risk for fracture. The World Health Organization uses a T-score of -2.5 to determine osteoporosis. BMD can further be classified with a "Z-score." Please discuss this with your doctor.

T-Score	What Your Score Means
Above 1	Your BMD is considered normal.
Between 1 and -2.5	Your BMD is below normal and may lead to osteoporosis.
Below -2.5	You have osteoporosis.
Your Score 	

## Prevention

Together, the following five steps can optimize bone health and help prevent osteoporosis:

- 1 Get the calcium and vitamin D you need every day. People over age 50 need 1,200 mg. of calcium and 800–1,000 units of vitamin D daily or as guided by vitamin D levels if available.
- 2 Do regular weight-bearing and muscle-strength exercises.
- 3 Don't smoke or drink too much alcohol. Smoking and/or excessive alcohol intake can add to the depletion of calcium in your bones.
- 4 Talk to your health care provider about your need for a Bone Mineral Density (BMD) test.
- 5 Take an osteoporosis medication when it is right for you.

