

SimplyWell

Wellness tips and encouragement from Hally® health.

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Benefits and coverage may vary from plan to plan. Please review your plan materials or call the number on the back of your health plan ID card for specifics.



Hally health

An Eye on Iron



When you think about healthy eating, do you think about iron? You should! Here's some key information from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics that'll help you keep your eye on iron.

The Basics

Iron is a key mineral for your health. It's used to create an important protein in your red blood cells, called hemoglobin, that carries oxygen throughout your body so your cells can create energy. It also helps your body remove carbon dioxide, make certain hormones and more.

When your iron levels are low, you're not able to create enough hemoglobin to efficiently carry oxygen throughout your body – and you can develop a health condition known as **iron-deficiency anemia**. Symptoms can include:

- Fatigue.
- Headache.
- Weakness.
- Dizziness.
- Pale skin and fingernails.
- Low body temperature.
- Inflamed tongue.

Take action – get your iron!

Make sure you get enough iron in your diet. Many foods contain iron, including both animal and plant options. Healthy meat, poultry and seafood choices are great, since they have iron that's easily absorbed by your body.

Veggies and plant-based foods that contain iron – like spinach, beans, lentils and iron-enriched grains (like certain rice, bread and cereal) – are also a great source, although it's recommended to eat these with meat, seafood, poultry or foods high in vitamin C (like citrus fruits, kiwi, strawberries or bell peppers). This helps your body better absorb the iron from plants.

Exactly how much iron should you aim for when picking your meals? Every body's different, but here are the recommended daily amounts for most people:

Sex/Age (Years)	Iron
Children/1-3	7 mg
Children/4-8	10 mg
Children/9-13	8 mg
Males/14-18	11 mg
Females/14-18	15 mg
Males/19+	8 mg
Females/19-50	18 mg
Females/51+	8 mg

And what about infants? Babies need iron for brain development and growth. They store enough of the mineral for their first four to six months of life. A pediatrician might recommend an iron supplement if a baby's premature or has a low birth weight and is breastfed. Most infant formulas are fortified with iron. Once a baby's 6 months old, they begin needing even more iron, so introducing solid foods when they're ready can provide great sources of the mineral.

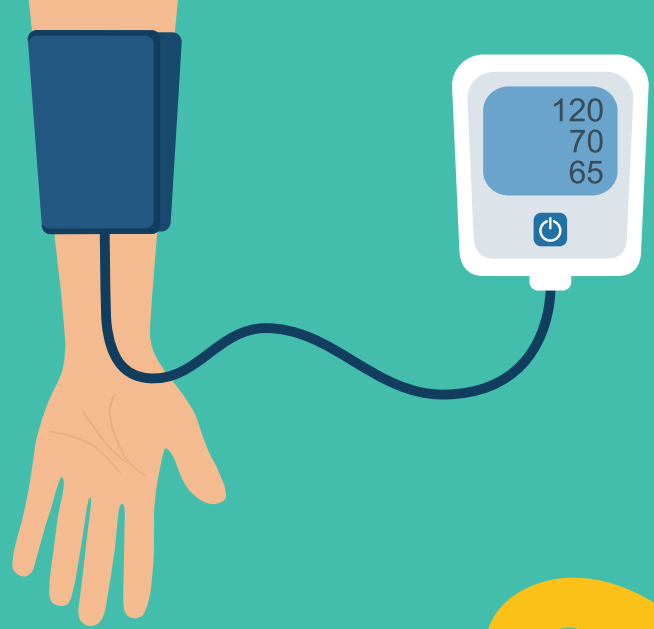
Final Thoughts

No matter what your age, iron's key to your health. If you or a loved one's at risk for iron-deficiency anemia, your doctor will know the best steps to take. They'll assess iron status and levels and work with you to come up with the best type of treatment, such as diet changes or adding supplements. With their help, you'll be on track for your healthiest life.

Doctor's Orders

Healthy Blood Pressure Tips

High blood pressure, also called hypertension, is something to take seriously. It can raise your risk of heart disease, stroke and more. But there's good news – you have the power to keep your blood pressure at a healthy level. Here's what you need to know, and do, according to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.



Lifestyle matters.

A healthy lifestyle can make a huge difference when it comes to blood pressure. Ask your doctor for even more advice, and start by following these life-changing tips:

- **Get moving!** Regular exercise can help lower your blood pressure. Get at least two and a half hours of moderate-intensity physical activity – think brisk walking or riding your bike – every week. Do something you enjoy, and break it up into five easy days of 30 minutes each.



- **Eat healthy.** Nutritious, “good-for-you” meals and snacks can help keep your blood pressure at a healthy level. Get plenty of fresh fruits and veggies, along with foods rich in fiber, potassium and protein. Eat less salt and saturated fat. Ask your doctor about the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) eating plan – it's helped countless people lower their blood pressure.

- **Stay at a healthy weight.** Being overweight or having obesity raises your risk for high blood pressure. Talk to your doctor about what your ideal healthy weight should be, and work with them to reach and maintain that weight.

- **Get your ZZZs.** Sleep matters – it helps keep your heart and blood vessels healthy. If you regularly get too little sleep, you're at higher risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke and more.



- **Don't smoke.** Smoking raises your blood pressure levels and increases your risk of stroke, heart attack and more. If you need help quitting, reach out to your doctor for resources and advice.

- **Limit your alcohol.** If you drink, don't have more than two (men) or one (women) alcoholic drink per day. Among other harms, having too much alcohol can raise your blood pressure.

You have the power.

Now's the time to take action. With changes to your lifestyle – and a commitment to stick to these changes – you can raise your chances of *lowering* your blood pressure and your risk of heart disease and stroke. Talk with your doctor. Set goals small, medium and large. Build day upon week upon month of your new, healthier life. You got this!

Diabetes 101

Your Hemoglobin A1C Test

We value your well-being and treat you as a partner in helping you improve your overall health and wellness. Part of this is teaching you ways to keep your blood sugar at healthy levels. This is especially important if you have diabetes or prediabetes. Today we'll learn about a simple test – called a **hemoglobin A1C** (or A1c or HbA1c) **test** – that's a key tool in helping you maintain healthy blood sugar numbers.

The Test

An A1C test shows how well you've controlled your blood sugar levels over the past three months. It does this by measuring how much the hemoglobin (a protein in your blood) is coated with sugar.

When you go in for the test, the healthcare provider will take a sample of your blood from your finger or arm. It doesn't take long – and you often get the results within a few minutes. And you can eat and drink before the test.



Your A1C results are reported as a percent. Ask your doctor what you should aim for based on your specific health conditions, but most people with diabetes should keep their **A1C below 7%**.

The results can also be reported as an **average blood sugar** number (in mg/dL, milligrams per deciliter). This is similar to what you see on the blood glucose meter you use at home. However, your at-home meter measures your one-time blood sugar at the exact time of your reading; the A1C test measures your average blood sugar levels over the entire past three months. Both are important, but your A1C test gives a more complete picture of how well you're controlling your blood sugar long term.

A1C	Average Blood Sugar
6%	126 mg/dL
7%	154 mg/dL
8%	183 mg/dL
9%	212 mg/dL
10%	240 mg/dL
11%	269 mg/dL
12%	298 mg/dL

Final Thoughts

Get an A1C test **at least twice every year**. If you've changed treatments or have had trouble controlling your blood sugar levels, you might need the test more often, perhaps every three months. Ask your doctor what they think is best.

Also know that your A1C test won't show you if you've had a lot of high or low blood sugar swings over the past three months – it only gives you your average level. That's why your at-home blood glucose meter readings are so important. You need both tools to best maintain your levels short and long term.

Finally, remember that your A1C test also doesn't predict the future. To keep getting good results, you'll need to keep up with the lifestyle changes and diabetes treatments your doctor recommends. You can do it! Ask your doctor for help along the way and take control of your blood sugar to live your healthiest life.

For information on coverage and costs (if applicable) for specific tests and healthcare appointments, please see your health plan materials or call the number on the back of your health plan ID card.

Source: "Hemoglobin A1c (A1C) Test." Association of Clinicians for the Underserved, and Trividia Health, Inc. 2019.

Understanding Your Health Plan

Prior Authorization

Understanding your health plan helps you get the most out of it – and makes getting care, services and prescriptions smooth and hassle-free. We're here to help! Today, let's learn about a process called prior authorization.

What is prior authorization?

Prior authorization is the process of getting **preapproval from your health plan** for certain medical procedures, medications and medical equipment **before** you receive them. If something requires prior authorization, **your doctor must submit the request to your health plan for review.** This allows your plan an opportunity to review proposed care ahead of time and ensure the request is appropriate for your specific health condition.

Additionally, your health plan can confirm if coverage for the procedure (or medication or equipment) is available under your plan, and provide you and your doctor the decision on whether coverage meets medical criteria.

Prior authorization is usually required for complex treatments, to make sure the care you get is safe, follows best-practice medical guidelines and is the best for your situation. Your health plan wants to make sure it's "**medically necessary**" – in other words, that it's recommended for your condition based on the latest scientific evidence.

How does prior authorization help you?

Think of it as a safety check. Before you get complex or high-risk treatments, your plan wants to make sure they're safe and effective compared to other options. This also helps prevent duplicate orders – for example, a second medical test when one is enough. Your health plan wants to make sure the treatment you're getting is right for your condition, and that you're getting it at the right time and from the right place. This'll help you stay safe and may also help keep your costs down.

Who's responsible for prior authorization?

Your doctor will start the prior authorization process by submitting the prior authorization request to your health plan with documentation supporting the reasons why the treatment is medically necessary for you.

Check your health plan materials for more information about the treatments, procedures, drugs and equipment that require prior authorization under your plan, or simply call the number on the back of your health plan ID card and ask if a specific treatment requires it.

What happens next?

Once your doctor submits the prior authorization request, your plan will review and either approve, deny or request additional information to help them make a decision. If your request is denied, your plan will provide you a denial letter telling you why.

How long does it take?

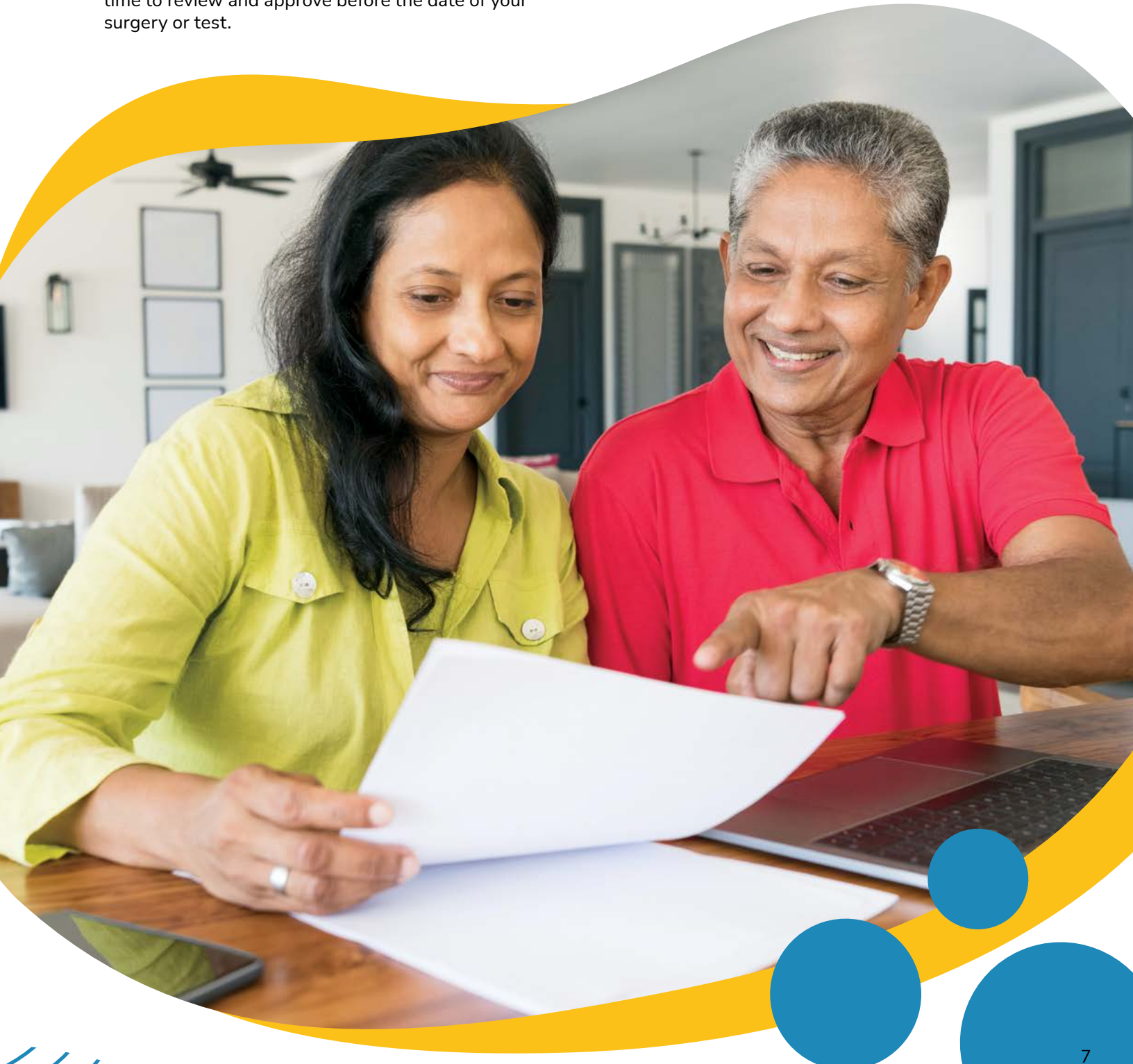
The amount of time it takes to receive and complete your prior authorization request is called turnaround time (TAT). Some requests are relatively simple and receive real-time automatic approval, while others may take longer, depending on the complexity of the review and whether your health plan needs to request additional information from your doctor. Urgent requests are handled within a 24-to-72-hour time frame.

What might cause delays?

If your doctor doesn't send all the necessary records, test results and documentation – along with their explanation for why you need the treatment – your health plan has to contact them to get this information. This can cause a delay as the health plan waits for your doctor to complete their steps. Make sure your doctor sends in prior authorization requests and all information well before you need your scheduled treatment, so your plan has enough time to review and approve before the date of your surgery or test.

Questions?

Prior authorization can help keep you safe and costs down, but we know the process can be confusing or even overwhelming – especially while you're dealing with serious medical issues. That's why your health plan is here to help. Before, during or after any stage in the process, you can reach out by calling the number on the back of your health plan ID card to get the answers and support you need.



Statins for People with Diabetes

If you or a loved one has diabetes, statin medications can help improve your health. Here's what you need to know, from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Therapeutic Research Center (TRC Healthcare®), and the American Diabetes Association®. We value treating you as a partner as together we work to improve your overall health and wellness.

What are statins?

Statins are medicines that help lower your cholesterol levels. They can also reduce the buildup of plaque (cholesterol deposits) in your blood vessels, lower the chance of blood clots, decrease swelling in your blood vessels' walls and more.

Why's this important? Because plaque buildup in the blood vessels is a common cause of heart disease, which is the leading cause of death in the U.S. Plaque makes it harder for blood to flow to the heart, leads to weakened heart muscles, and increases the risk for stroke and heart attack.

People with diabetes are twice as likely to develop heart disease – which is why statin medications are especially important for this group. With the help of statins, you can lower your cholesterol and reduce the dangerous plaque buildup that leads to heart disease. Statins can even help lower your risk if your cholesterol levels aren't high.

Most people with diabetes should be on a statin.

Other than a few exceptions – for example, if you're pregnant or have previously experienced a rare condition called rhabdomyolysis – **you should take a statin if you're age 40 to 75 and have diabetes**. Of course, always follow the guidance of your doctor.

Your doctor will also know what type and strength of statin is best for you. In general, they might recommend a moderate-intensity statin if you don't have any other cardiovascular risk factors – or a high-intensity option if you do. For example, you might need a higher intensity if you've had a heart attack or stroke or have high blood pressure or kidney disease. And if you have diabetes but are over 75 or younger than 40, you can talk with your doctor about the pros and cons of statin medications for someone your age.



Have an open discussion with your doctor.

Statins can be lifesaving – but if you have any questions or concerns about taking these medications, talk to your doctor. Tell them what you’ve heard about statins (there’s a lot of information out there, both true and not so true!), and have them tell you about possible side effects and how rare or likely they are. You may have heard, for example, that statins sometimes cause muscle weakness or pain – but this can often be managed, if it occurs at all. Also talk about the multiple options you might have, such as different types of statins and varying strengths of doses. If you’ve had previous issues, it’s definitely OK to start “low and slow” as you look out for any side effects. Be open with your doctor and don’t be too shy to ask them your questions. Together you’ll find the treatment plan that works best for you.

Your health plan can help too.

Finally, know that the pharmacists at your health plan can help too. Reach out to them to learn more about statins, how they work and the different options you have. Call the number on the back of your health plan ID card and ask to connect to a pharmacist. They’re your partner, ready to help.



hally®



Let's cook
something
delish!

Noodles and Veggie Stir-Fry

Serving Size: 1 Cup
4 Servings

Ingredients

- 10 oz buckwheat soba noodles
- 1 tsp canola oil
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 orange or yellow bell pepper, chopped
- 1 zucchini, diced
- 1½ cups fresh spinach, chopped
- ¼ cup chives (or scallions), diced
- 3 tsp soy sauce, low sodium
- 2 tsp sesame oil
- 1 tbsp sesame seeds

Directions

1. Cook soba noodles according to package instructions, drain and set aside.
2. Heat medium saucepan over medium-high heat, add canola oil and sauté garlic for two to three minutes.
3. Add peppers and cook until softened.
4. Add zucchini and cook another few minutes.
5. Add spinach and chives, and cook three to four minutes.
6. Add soy sauce, sesame oil and sesame seeds. Cook together for two to three minutes more.
7. Place mixture over soba noodles and toss thoroughly before serving.

Find more delicious recipes at [hally.com/category/food-cooking](https://www.hally.com/category/food-cooking). Yum!

Calories: 370, Total Fat: 7 g, Saturated Fat: 1 g, Cholesterol: 0 mg, Sodium: 150 mg, Total Carbohydrate: 70 g, Fiber: 7 g, Total Sugars: 6 g, Protein: 11 g, Vitamin A: 35%, Vitamin C: 200%, Calcium: 6%, Iron: 15%

Source: EatRight.org

Photo may include foods and ingredients that aren't a part of this recipe or included in the nutrition analysis.

Strength Against Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is common, especially as we age. But all of us have the power to keep our bones strong and healthy. Here's some key information, from the experts at UpToDate®.



Some Basics

Osteoporosis is a disease that makes bones weak and more likely to fracture or break. It's often called the "silent disease" because it has no warning signs or symptoms until you break a bone. Fractures happen most often in the wrist, pelvis, hip, spine and upper arm.

Broken bones are serious. Not only are they painful, but they can also lead to long-term difficulties. For example, some people lose the ability to walk after breaking a hip. That's why preventing breaks is so important.

Knowing is key.

If osteoporosis has no warning signs, how can you know if you have it? Luckily, there's a test your doctor can do. It's called a **DEXA scan**, and it's a special type of X-ray that measures your bone strength and thickness – telling you if you have osteoporosis or are likely to develop it.

Experts recommend that women over 65 get a DEXA scan, as well as others (both women and men) at risk for osteoporosis. Risk factors include family history, weight, age, smoking, history of fractures and more.

If you think you're at risk, ask your doctor if a DEXA scan is right for you.

Keep your bones healthy and strong.

Every day, we can take actions that help keep our bones strong. Here are some key things to do:

- **Get your calcium.** Think low-fat milk, yogurt, cheese and other dairy, as well as green leafy veggies.
- **Have foods and drinks high in vitamin D.** Eat fish like salmon, tuna, halibut, mackerel, sardines and herring. Pick milk that has vitamin D added.
- **Ask your doctor if you should take calcium and vitamin D pills**, if you're not getting enough through your food.
- **Don't smoke.**
- **Limit your alcohol.** If you drink, don't have more than two (men) or one (women) drink per day.

- **Get your exercise.** Be physically active at least 30 minutes, most days of the week. Ask your doctor what activities are best for your age and health, including exercises that can help strengthen your bones and improve your balance (to help prevent falls).



If you have osteoporosis, there are also medicines to help treat it. Your doctor will probably first prescribe a type of medication called a **bisphosphonate**. If that type of drug doesn't help you enough – or if you have side effects – there are also other options. Your doctor will guide the best treatment for you.

Finally, remember that even simple things can help prevent broken bones. Ask your doctor for tips about making your home more "fall proof" by adding better lighting, installing rails and grab bars, removing loose rugs, tucking away electrical cords, and more. No bones about it – even small steps like this can make a big difference for your health, safety and well-being.

For information on coverage and costs (if applicable) for specific tests, scans and healthcare appointments, please see your health plan materials or call the number on the back of your health plan ID card.

Tips for Bladder Control

Bladder control issues can be hard to talk about, but many people deal with them and they're nothing to be embarrassed about. Accidental urine leakage – called urinary incontinence – is especially common as we age. It can be very uncomfortable and get in the way of our daily activities. To help you or your loved ones deal with this common issue, we've gathered our top tips from the National Institutes of Health and other experts.

Step 1

The first and most important step? Talk to your doctor. If you're dealing with bladder control issues, it's key you reach out to them. They're the expert who knows your health and medical history, and they can help discover the specifics – and possibly even the cause – of your bladder issues. They'll create the treatment plan that's right for you.

Next Steps and Tips

Everyday lifestyle changes can actually go a long way in helping you improve bladder control. Follow these tips and ask your doctor for even more advice.

- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, carbonated drinks and spicy foods.
- Use the restroom on a set schedule, perhaps once an hour.
- Don't lift heavy weights or hefty objects.
- Quit smoking and other tobacco use.
- Stay at a healthy weight.

Try Kegel exercises.

Certain exercises – called Kegel or pelvic floor exercises – can strengthen your muscles to help keep urine from leaking. Follow these steps:

- First, find your pelvic floor muscles by pretending you're sitting on a marble and trying to lift it off your chair. (Don't actually use a marble.)
- Now you know where your pelvic floor muscles are. While sitting or lying down, tighten these muscles for eight to 10 seconds, and then relax them for three seconds. This counts as one repetition. Do eight to 10 repetitions, three times a day.



And try these tips too.

- If you have a sudden urge to use the bathroom, tighten your pelvic floor muscles while standing or sitting. Once you no longer have the urge, go to the restroom.
- Tighten your pelvic floor muscles when sneezing, coughing or laughing.
- Ask your doctor if other treatment options, like pelvic floor physical therapy or medication, may be right for you.

Find more support, information and resources.

- Visit niddk.nih.gov and search “Bladder Control Problems.” This is great information from the National Institutes of Health about bladder control issues – facts, symptoms, causes, prevention and more.
- Visit nafc.org, the site of the National Association for Continence, for resources, support, education and more.

Bladder issues are uncomfortable but common. And so many people have found ways to control and treat them with the help of their doctors. You can too! Start the conversation – and your action plan – today.

Right Care, Right Place

Know where to go for care.

When you need a healthcare service, where should you go? Should you call your primary care provider? Visit the hospital or urgent care clinic? It all depends, based on what your illness, injury or need is; how severe it is; how soon you need care; your location; and more. Use this guide to help – and cut it out and put it on your fridge for easy reference.



Where to Go	When to Go	Typical Costs	Appointment Needed?
Primary Care Provider (PCP)	Non-emergency care. Physicals and wellness checks, vaccines, routine care and illness. Available in person and (often) by phone/video.	\$-\$\$	Yes. Available during usual business hours. Same-day often available.
Virtual Visits*	Non-emergency care. Illness, injury, behavioral health and more. Available from home or anywhere, by phone or video through hally.com.*	\$ Free with some plans.	No. Available 24/7, 365. Wait Time: ~15 mins.
Urgent Care Clinic	Non-emergency care. Illnesses and injuries that need care right away. Available in person.	\$-\$\$	No. Available for extended hours. Often open seven days a week.
Emergency Department	Emergency care. Immediate treatment for serious or life-threatening illnesses, injuries and issues.	\$\$\$\$	No. Available 24/7, 365. Potentially longer wait times.

For coverage information – or if you have any questions – call the number on the back of your health plan ID card. **And remember, always call 911 right away if you have a life-threatening medical or mental health emergency.**

Have you tried out virtual visits?*

Getting expert, trusted help for your physical, emotional and behavioral health needs has never been easier. Many plans offer **virtual visits**, which let you connect with board certified doctors and psychiatrists, as well as licensed therapists, by phone or secure video 24 hours a day, 365 days a year – all through your phone, tablet or computer.

Physical Health Needs – Get help for your allergies, insect bites, rashes, cold and flu

symptoms, ear problems, pink eye, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and many other common conditions.

Emotional and Behavioral Health Needs – Get help for anxiety, stress, depression, grief, PTSD, trauma, bipolar disorder, addictions and substance issues, and more.

Easily set up a virtual visit online from **hally.com**.* Simply log in and get started today.

**Virtual visits aren't available on all plans. Also, some plans feature virtual visits through a source other than hally.com. To see if virtual visits are available on your plan (and to see if they're offered through hally.com), please see your health plan materials or call the number on the back of your health plan ID card.*

For more information about virtual visits, or help getting started, call the number on the back of your health plan ID card.

Virtual care isn't meant to treat all medical conditions – please remember to always visit the emergency department or call 911 for emergencies.

You'll need to have an online member account (for your health plan) before you're able to access virtual visits. If you haven't already created an account, visit login.hally.com.

For more specific details and information about coverage and costs for virtual offerings, please see your health plan materials or call the number on the back of your health plan ID card.



Cut here!



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HEALTH AND WELLNESS OR
PREVENTION INFORMATION

Want to make a difference?

We are looking for members who are comfortable sharing their perspectives and feedback on how we, as a health plan, can improve for the greater good of our plan participants. If you are interested in learning more, please email Gregg.Mottola@HealthAlliance.org. Meetings are typically held on a quarterly basis, so you would be asked to share your perspective three to four times a year. As always, our goal is to represent our plan participants' diverse geographic, cultural and medical backgrounds.

Benefits and coverage may vary from plan to plan. Please review your plan materials or call the number on the back of your health plan ID card for specifics.