canopy imaging

Bone Densitometry

(DEXA)

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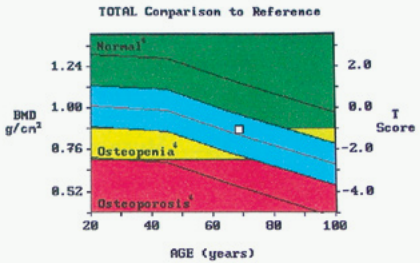
What is a Bone Densitometry Scan?

A bone density scan (DEXA scan) is an imaging test using minimal radiation to measure the calcium content of the bone. This value is used to determine bone strength.

How does it work and why is it done?

Bone density scanning, also called dual energy X-ray absorptiometry (DEXA), or bone densitometry, is an enhanced form of X-ray technology used to assess bone loss, or osteoporosis. It employs a DEXA scanner, uses minimal radiation dose, and measures your bone density in relation to the average for a person of your size and weight.



A Bone Density test can:

- Detect low bone density before a fracture occurs
- Confirm a diagnosis of osteoporosis
- Determine your rate of bone density change, if you have serial studies
- Monitor the effect of any treatment you are having for osteoporosis

The image above is an example of a bone density scan for a hip. The measurement of bone density is shown on a graph of average bone density for your age and size (indicated by a small square on marked areas of the graph).

Appointments

Please contact us to make an appointment for your scan, if you have a referral from your doctor please bring this with you.

The examination

Please wear clothing without buckles, buttons or zips. When you have your bone density scan you will be asked to lie on a table where you will hear a quiet machine noise. A scanning arm will move above you (it will not touch you). The technician will tell you when the scan is finished. The scan takes about
20 to 40 minutes.

Post examination

A written report is sent to your doctor.

What is Osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis is reduced calcium content of bone, which may result in an increased risk of fracture. It affects both men and women and for some women this may be rapid and severe. The consequences of osteoporosis include pain, disability and deformity. Loss of bone strength may progress to a broken bone.

What are the risk factors?

- being female
- a small, thin frame
- advancing age
- a family history of osteoporosis
- anorexia nervosa or bulimia
- use of certain medications, (e.g. steroids, anticonvulsants, thyroxine)
- low testosterone levels in men
- a sedentary lifestyle
- cigarette smoking
- excessive alcohol intake
- malabsorption problems
- a diet low in calcium

How do I reduce my risk factors?

- Eat a balanced diet that is high in calcium. Dairy products such as milk, cheese, green vegetables and oily fish are calcium-rich foods.
- Spend time outdoors in sunlight each day to ensure an adequate supply of vitamin D
- Keep active with 30 mins of physical activity each day: Weight-bearing exercise works best e.g. walking, dancing, golf, tennis
- Limit alcohol intake
- Don't smoke

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