

Why you should ask your doctor about having a

# Bone Density DEXA Scan



Osteoporosis is a generalized, progressive reduction of bone density that often leads to skeletal weakness. It is a potentially progressive and debilitating disease in which bones become fragile and more likely to break. In fact, osteoporosis is a leading cause of fractures in both men and women over the age of 65.

Bone densitometry measures the bone denseness in various sites of the body and can detect osteoporosis before a fracture occurs. This exam helps predict your chances of future fracture, determines your current rate of bone loss, and can assist your healthcare provider in diagnosing osteoporosis and advising you in appropriate preventions and treatment for this disease.

The bone densitometer uses small amounts of x-ray to produce images of the spine, hip, forearm, or whole body. The x-ray is composed of two energy levels, which are absorbed differently by the bones in the body. The test may also be referred to as a DEXA scan (dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry). A specialized software program is able to determine from the differences in bone absorption how much bone mineral is present. The spine and hip are measured most frequently, since that is where osteoporotic fractures most often occur.

**You simply lay down for this 10 minute exam  
in the comfort of your own clothing\***

The bone densitometer is similar to a large examination table. Your name, age, height, weight, and ethnicity are entered into the computer prior to the test. This information is used to compare your results to a "normal" reference group. The amount of x-rays absorbed is about 1/10th of that received from a chest x-ray. This is comparable to the naturally occurring radiation a person is exposed to in one week. Even though the x-ray dose is very low, you will be asked to inform our staff if you are pregnant or might be pregnant before the test is conducted.

\*Belt buckles, metal or thick plastic buttons, and metal jewelry will need to be removed from the area being examined, please dress appropriately.



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Request to schedule your DEXA online at [dinw.com](http://dinw.com)

You will need a referral from your provider to schedule an exam.

“ It was only the very painful experience of four vertebral fractures that forced an investigation of my bone health. A bone density examination revealed severe osteopenia in both my spine and femur regions, requiring immediate measures to be taken. To this day I still have back pain, and my body neither feels nor looks the same as it once did. I still have trouble cleaning the house, vacuuming, making the bed or being in one position for a prolonged period of time. I am now committed to preventing anyone from enduring the same experience that I did. Who would have known I am only 40, when I feel like 80.

### Available at all three locations:

#### **Bonney Lake Imaging Center**

21110 SR 410 East, Suite 110  
Bonney Lake, WA 98391

#### **Puyallup Imaging Center**

222 15th Avenue SE  
Puyallup, WA 98372

#### **Sunrise Imaging Center**

11212 Sunrise Blvd. East, Suite 200  
Puyallup, WA 98374

Ask your provider about getting a referral. DEXA (Bone Density) services may be scheduled Monday-Friday. It is always best to check with your insurance carrier on benefits. Also, a good time to schedule this exam is at the same time you schedule your **annual** mammogram.

## Bone Density Scan FAQ's

Bone density tests are a quick and painless procedure. Here are some Frequently Asked Questions to help guide your decision as to whether bone density testing is right for you.

### What is a Bone Density Scan (DEXA)?

Bone density scanning, also called dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry (DEXA) or bone densitometry, is an enhanced form of x-ray technology that is used to measure bone loss. DEXA is today's established standard for measuring bone mineral density (BMD).

DEXA is most often performed on the lower spine and hips. In children and some adults, the whole body is sometimes scanned. Peripheral devices that use x-ray or ultrasound are sometimes used to screen for low bone mass. In some communities, a CT scan with special software can also be used to diagnose or monitor low bone mass (QCT). This is accurate but less commonly used than DEXA scanning.

### What age is best to start getting a DEXA?

About 40% of postmenopausal women in the U.S. have osteopenia (low bone density). An additional 7% have osteoporosis. BMD (bone mineral density) analysis is recommended for women between ages 50 and 65 with risk factors for osteoporosis and for all women over the age of 65. In addition, men and women taking certain medications or having certain diseases should discuss testing with their doctor.

Current practice recommends BMD retesting every 2 years. However, recent research suggests that some women may be able to wait a much longer time between their screening tests. Discuss with your doctor how often you should be tested.

## A Bit on Bones

Some people think of bones as hard and lifeless, but they are actually living, growing tissue. Your bones are made up of three major components that make them flexible and strong.

### What can you do to protect your bones?

- Get enough calcium and vitamin D and eat a well balanced diet
- Engage in regular exercise
- Eat foods that are good for bone health, such as fruits and vegetables
- Avoid smoking and drink alcohol in moderation

# More Helpful Information

### Who Should get a Bone Density Exam?

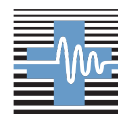
Bone density testing is strongly recommended if you:

- are a post-menopausal woman and not taking estrogen
- have a personal or maternal history of hip fracture or smoking
- are a post-menopausal woman who is tall (over 5 feet 7 inches) or thin (less than 125 pounds)
- are a man with clinical conditions associated with bone loss
- use medications that are known to cause bone loss, including corticosteroids such as Prednisone, various anti-seizure medications such as Dilantin and certain barbiturates, or high-dose thyroid replacement drugs
- have type 1 (formerly called juvenile or insulin-dependent) diabetes, liver disease, kidney disease or a family history of osteoporosis
- have high bone turnover, which shows up in the form of excessive collagen in urine samples
- have a thyroid condition, such as hyperthyroidism
- have a parathyroid condition, such as hyperparathyroidism
- have experienced a fracture after only mild trauma
- have had x-ray evidence of vertebral fracture or other signs of osteoporosis

### How should I prepare?

On the day of the exam you may eat normally. You should not take calcium supplements for at least 24 hours before your exam.

You should wear loose, comfortable clothing, avoiding garments that have zippers, belts or buttons made of metal. Objects such as keys or wallets that would be in the area being scanned should be removed.



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