

The DXA Scan is also useful in following bone changes. The bone densitometer can monitor how the effects of age, diet and treatments affect your bone status. Your doctor may suggest follow-up tests to detect change over time.

What is fracture risk? Why is it important to me? The DXA Scan provides information about your own risk of bone fracture in the same way a cholesterol test indicates a risk of a heart attack. A diagnosis of osteoporosis cannot predict a bone fracture, just as high cholesterol cannot predict a heart attack. Instead, it means that the risk of having a fracture is higher than that for normal bones. Your test results combined with other factors sum up your overall risk of fracture.

Are there other tests? Ultrasound can also be used to measure the status of the bone. Biochemical tests may be used for additional information in some cases.

Where can I get more information about bone measurements and osteoporosis? The National Osteoporosis Foundation (NOF) is one of the leading sources of information about osteoporosis and bone measurements.

Contact the NOF at:

National Osteoporosis Foundation

1150 17th St SW Suite 500

Washington, DC 20036-4603

(202) 223-2226

Website: www.nof.org

Are you at risk for osteoporosis?

“By 2020 half of all Americans over 50 will have weak bones unless we make changes to our diet and lifestyle. People who have weak bones are at higher risk for fractures. Americans are living longer, and this means that our bones need to stay strong so we can be active and enjoy life. Strong bones begin in childhood. With good habits and medical attention when needed, we can have strong bones throughout our lives.”

2004 Surgeon General's Report on Bone Health & Osteoporosis

The National Osteoporosis Foundation recommends women have a bone density test if you are:

- Over 65 years of age
- Postmenopausal with more than one risk factor or with a fracture
- Considering osteoporosis therapy
- On prolonged hormone replacement therapy

For more information about our DXA Scan Bone Density Test or to schedule a scan, please contact our office:

Missoula Bone & Joint
2360 Mullan Road Suite C
Missoula, MT 59808
(406) 721-4436 or (866) 721-4436
www.missoulaboneandjoint.com



DXA Scan Bone Density Test



5 Simple Steps to Good Bone Health

- Take daily calcium and Vitamin D
- Do regular weight-bearing exercise
- Avoid smoking & excessive alcohol
- Talk to your doctor about bone health
- Have a bone density test and take medication when appropriate



About Osteoporosis and Bone Densitometry Tests (DXA Scans)

Definition of Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis means "porous bone." This condition develops when bone is no longer replaced as quickly as it is removed. Bone is a living tissue, comprising mainly of calcium and protein. Healthy bone is always being remodeled; that is, small amounts are being absorbed in your body and small amounts are being replaced. If more bone calcium is absorbed than is replaced, the density or the mass of the bone is reduced. The bone becomes progressively weaker, increasing the risk that it may break.

Important risk factors for osteoporosis include:

- Female
- Caucasian
- Advanced age
- History of bone fracture
- A small thin frame
- A family history of osteoporosis
- Removal of the ovaries
- Early menopause
- A low calcium diet
- Lack of exercise
- Eating disorders
- Certain medicines (such as steroids or anticonvulsants)
- Alcohol and tobacco use

How do I know if I have

Osteoporosis? Osteoporosis is often called the "silent disease". There are rarely signs until a lot of bone has been lost. Visible symptoms may include loss of height along with curvature of the upper back. Osteoporosis also can result in a crippling and painful fracture, occurring most often in the hip, back or wrist.



How does the DXA Scan work?

The Bone Densitometry Test (DXA Scan) measures bone mineral density (BMD). The amount of bone mineral relates directly to bone strength. The bone densitometer uses small amounts of x-ray to measure BMD and to produce images of the spine, hip, and forearm. The technical term for the method is "dual energy x-ray absorptiometry" or DXA. The spine and hip are typically measured because that is where most osteoporotic fractures occur.

What can I expect during my DXA Scan?

The bone densitometer is a large, padded and comfortable examination table. You will be asked to lie on your back. Belt buckles, metal or thick plastic buttons and metal jewelry will need to be removed from the region being examined. The operator will position your arms and legs for the test, which is painless and typically takes 15 minutes. You just need to lie still and breathe normally.



Is the test safe? Even though x-rays are used, the amount of radiation absorbed by the patient is minimal. The x-ray dose from a DXA scan test is comparable to the naturally occurring radiation you are exposed to in one week. In fact, you are exposed to more radiation on a coast to coast airline flight than you are during a DXA scan.

Caution: Even though the x-ray dose from the DXA Scan is very low, please inform the operator if you are pregnant or might be pregnant before your test!

What information will the test give my doctor? A DXA Scan helps doctors diagnose osteoporosis. The test compares your bone mineral density (BMD) to that of a "young adult" at peak bone strength. It also compares your results to people of your same age, called "age-matched". This information along with other factors, helps providers gauge your risk of osteoporotic fractures. The difference between your result and that of a "young adult" is given as a T-score. A panel of experts at the World Health Organization (WHO) has developed categories that define the amount of bone loss.

Normal: a T-score that is above -1

Osteopenic (Low bone density): a T-score between -1 and -2.5

Osteoporosis: a T-score below -2.5

Your T-score is one factor that your doctor will consider in making a diagnosis.

The National Foundation of Osteoporosis (NOF) recommends treatment if you have:

- a T-score < -1.5 with risk factors
- a T-score < -2.0 with no risk factors
- had a fracture and are postmenopausal