

How to Prepare for Your **Bone Density (DEXA) Exam**

Exam Overview

What is Bone Density (DEXA)?

Bone Densitometry is a fast, safe, and painless test that uses advanced technology called DEXA (Dual-Energy X-Ray Absorptiometry) to measure symptoms of osteoporosis—such as low density and mineral content of bone—that may have developed unnoticed over many years. Because osteoporosis can result in bone fractures that can cause chronic pain, disability, and loss of independence, it is important to begin treating osteoporosis at an early stage. Bone densitometry can detect the early signs of osteoporosis so that patients can begin treating it before a debilitating fracture occurs.

During a comprehensive DEXA bone evaluation, a patient lies comfortably on a padded table while the DEXA unit scans one or more areas of his/her body, usually the spine or hip because they are particularly prone to fracturing. Unlike conventional X-rays, bone densitometry produces little radiation—less than that produced during a coast-to-coast airline flight. Bone densitometry is noninvasive, involves no injections and, depending upon the number of areas to be scanned, can take just minutes to complete.

Bone Density (DEXA) Exam Prep Checklist

- Do not take any calcium supplements or antacids (including those in pill form) for 24 hours before your appointment. This includes any calcium in pill form.
- Please be sure to bring your referral from your doctor with you when you come for your appointment. If you do not have it with you, we may not be able to perform your test.
- Please arrive 10 minutes early to register.

