

Bone Densitometry: A *Fast, Simple Examination*

Your bone densitometry examination may be the easiest medical examination you will have over the course of your life. Basically, all it involves is for you to lie back and let the bone densitometer do the work. However, there are always valid concerns about any medical procedure. For your piece of mind, this section addresses these important questions.

Will it hurt?

Absolutely not. There is no pain at all associated with a bone densitometry exam.

Is the examination safe?

Bone densitometry involves an extremely small dose of radiation. How small? An AP spine scan delivers less than one-tenth the dosage of a chest X-ray. As in any medical procedure, if you are pregnant be sure to inform the technologist or your physician.

Is there any special preparation involved?

Unlike many other medical examinations, no special preparation is required. It is recommended you wear loose fitting clothing during the exam, free from any metal buttons, buckles or zippers.

Do I have to alter my eating habits?

This is not an examination that requires you to have an empty stomach, drink a certain amount of water, or any other such pre-examination preparation on your part.

How long will the examination take?

Upon arrival, you will be asked to fill out a simple "Osteoporosis Questionnaire" form giving us information about your diet, medical condition, and lifestyle. The bone density measurements of your AP Spine, Femur, and Lateral Spine take a total of approximately 15-30 minutes to complete.

What do I do during the examination?

Lie still. Breathe normally. Rest comfortably.

What will the examination determine?

The bone densitometer will measure your bone mineral density (BMD). It will also compare your measurements to a reference population based on your age, weight, sex, and ethnic background. This information will be used by your physician in making a diagnosis about your bone status and fracture risk. All in all, bone mineral density testing is a safe, simple, and effective way of diagnosing osteoporosis.

When will I get my results from the exam?

Results are sent (or faxed) to your primary care physician within 36 hours of the exam.

Your physician will contact you with the results.

Is that all there is to it?

That's all. Your physician will take care of the rest. Relax and enjoy the examination.