

DEXA Scan

A DEXA scan, also called a bone density test, measures how strong your bones are and therefore helps to see if you are at risk for broken bones (fractures).

DEXA can help your doctor identify osteoporosis.

THE spine and hips are sites for the scan; in some the forearm may also be scanned.

Who should get a DEXA scan?

- Women older than 65 years
- Men older than 70 years
- Post-menopausal women with risk factors*
- Women older than 50 years with a fracture
- Anyone on medications that can cause bone loss (corticosteroids for 3 months or more, high doses of thyroid medications and others)
- Anyone over age 50 years and with a diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis
- Anyone with loss of more than an inch in height
- Anyone on treatment for osteoporosis
- Anyone diagnosed with primary hyper parathyroid disease

Who should NOT get a DEXA scan?

- Pregnant women

Getting a DEXA scan?

- The DEXA scan is a kind of x-ray
- It takes about 30 minutes to complete
- Stop taking calcium supplements a day before the scan
- A repeat scan may be needed after a few years. It depends on the results of previous cans and in most people they can be repeated after 2 years
- It is best to use the same machine for repeat scans



T-SCORE

- The results of the DEXA scan are reported as a T-score
- The T-score describes how your bone density compares to the bones of a healthy, 25-35 year old of the same gender and same race/ethnicity
- Positive T-score means your bones are stronger than normal. Negative scores are associated with weaker bones

World Health Organization (WHO) definitions

T-score		Diagnosis	Fractures risk
-1.0 or higher		Normal bone density	None
-1.1 to -2.4		Osteopenia	Increased
-2.5 or lower		Osteoporosis	High
-2.5 or lower and fracture		Severe osteoporosis	Very high

Z-scores

- A Z-score compares your bone density to the bones of people your own age and gender
- This is used in children, premenopausal women and men less than 50 years

FRAX - Fracture Risk Assessment tool

- The FRAX estimates the risk for fracture within the next 10 years in eligible persons with a diagnosis of osteopenia based on the DEXA scan
- The FRAX score can help doctors identify those at high risk of fracture
- If fracture risk is estimated to be more than 3% risk at the hip or more than 20% risk for major osteoporotic fractures, treatment for osteoporosis is indicated