

What is a Bone Mineral Density Study?

A BMD is used most often to diagnose osteoporosis, a condition that results in thinner, more fragile bones that are more likely to break.

The BMD is a simple and painless way of measuring the concentration of calcium in your bones using x-rays. The amount of radiation involved is less than half that of a chest x-ray. The information gathered is used to determine if you have bone loss, if you are at risk for bones to break, and if in treatment to help prevent fractures, to see if it has been effective.

What special instructions do I need to follow to be ready for my examination?

If there is any possibility you might be pregnant, please inform your Health Care Provider before the procedure, as the procedure may have to be postponed or cancelled.

If you had a barium study or a nuclear medicine scan recently, you must wait 14 days before having your BMD study done.

If you are in a wheelchair and need assistance to stand or are unable to stand, please let our booking office know so that we can ensure staff are available to assist you.

If you are unable to keep your given appointment, please let us know as soon as possible.

Please do not wear clothes with metal buttons, snaps or zippers. A sweatsuit or similar outfit is ideal. Please do not use perfume or other scented products on the day of your study.

Who will perform my examination?

This examination will be performed by a Medical Radiation Technologist specially trained to perform this study.

What happens to me during my examination?

Once in the x-ray room, you will be asked to remove your shoes and lie down on a table with a foam cushion under your knees. A special scanner will pass over your abdomen and measure the density of the bones in your lower back (lumbar spine). The technologist will then remove the cushion and your feet will be secured to a special brace in order to measure the density in one of your hips.

Should I expect any after effects as a result of my examination?

No after effects are expected from BMD testing.

When and how will I know the results?

Your Health Care Provider will usually have a written report from the Radiologist within one week of your examination. You should obtain the results from your own Health Care Provider.

If you have any questions or concerns that have not been answered here, please feel free to ask the Diagnostic Imaging staff involved in your examination.