



WHAT IS A BMD?

A Bone Densitometry scan or Dual Energy X-Ray Absorptiometry (DEXA) is a safe, fast and accurate test to assess your bone mineral density. It is used to diagnose osteoporosis and assess your fracture risk. It is also used to monitor your bone density especially if you are on treatment for osteoporosis.

In general, bone tissue is constantly being broken down and reformed. After the age of 35 the body tends to break down more bone tissue than it forms. This loss of bone density is particularly accelerated in women after menopause. The loss of bone density causes the bones to become porous and brittle and may result in the bones fracturing, leading to loss of mobility and independence. This scanner works by measuring the amount of x-rays that are absorbed by the bones. The dual energy x-ray energies allow the machine to differentiate between bone and soft tissue, giving a very accurate estimation of bone density.

Osteoporosis is one of the most prevalent diseases affecting Australians, particularly in old age. It has been estimated that 60% of women and 30% of men over 60 years of age are affected.

WHO IS AT A HIGH RISK OF OSTEOPOROSIS?

- A person who has broken a bone after a minor bump or fall
- A female who has undergone menopause before the age of 45
- A female who has ceased menstruation for >12 months (other than pregnancy)
- A person who has taken corticosteroid tablets for more than 6 months
- A person who has lost more than 3cm in height

WHO DOES MY BMD AND REPORT?

A Radiographer who is university-trained and accredited by the Australian Institute of Radiography (AIR) will perform the examination. The person who views and interprets the BMD images is a doctor specialising in Radiology, known as a Radiologist.

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT WHEN I HAVE MY BMD?

You will be asked to lie still on a scan table, you will not be asked to hold your breath. A scanner will pass over your spine and/or hip. You will not feel anything during the examination.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS OR SIDE EFFECTS FROM BMD?

Even though x-rays are used, the amount absorbed by the patient is only about 1/10th of that received from a chest x-ray. Your doctor has sent you for this test knowing that the information provided by the scan is more beneficial than the very low risk associated with it. The skill of the operator and the design of the machine ensure you receive the lowest radiation dose possible. If you are pregnant, or if it is possible that you may be pregnant, then a BMD is usually not performed unless it is an absolute medical necessity to do so.

HOW DO I PREPARE FOR MY BMD?

- You will need to phone one of our friendly reception staff to book an appointment.
- Where possible, please wear clothing with no metallic object such as zips or metal buttons as these can affect the scan. If required, we can provide you with a gown before scanning.
- This examination is covered by Medicare for specific conditions, so you will be asked to complete a questionnaire to ensure you are eligible for a Medicare rebate.

Things to bring along to your appointment:

- Films of previous Bone Mineral Densitometry and x-rays of your hips or spine.
- Referral (this is a legal requirement).

FEES

Exact Radiology Clinics bulk bill most Medicare eligible services, however some examinations incur a fee. Our booking staff will advise you when you phone to make your appointment. If a fee applies, payment is requested on the day of the examination.