

What should I expect during and after the exam?

Bone density tests are a quick and painless procedure.

The DEXA bone density test is usually completed within 10 to 30 minutes, depending on the equipment used and the parts of the body being examined

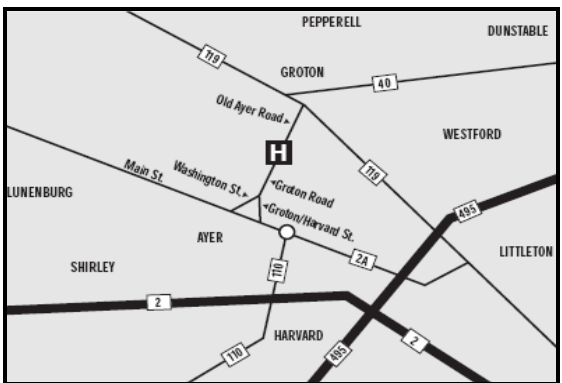
How to prepare for the exam:

- On the day of the exam you may eat normally. You should not take calcium supplements for at least 24 hours before your exam.
- You should wear loose, comfortable clothing, avoiding garments that have zippers, belts or buttons made of metal.
- You may also be asked to remove jewelry, eye glasses and any metal objects or clothing that might interfere with the x-ray images.

Inform your physician if you recently had a barium examination or have been injected with a contrast material for a computed tomography (CT) scan or radioisotope scan. You may have to wait before undergoing a DEXA (Bone Density) test.

ALL EXAMS REQUIRE AN ORDER SIGNED BY YOUR PHYSICIAN.

This brochure is intended to provide basic information to our **Bone Density** patients. If you have any remaining questions about your exam, please consult your physician.



From the NORTH:

SOUTH on Rt.495 to Littleton Common/Groton Exit 31, Rt. 119. Head WEST toward Groton on Rt. 119. Left on Old Ayer Rd., just before Groton Center. Old Ayer Rd. becomes Groton Rd. Travel 2.0 mi. Hospital is on the right.

From the SOUTH:

NORTH on Rt.495 to Rt.2 WEST. Follow Rt. 2W to Ayer/Harvard Rt.110 Exit 38B. Follow to 110 to Ayer rotary, turn right off rotary onto Main St., immediately beyond McDonald's. Follow Main St. .3 mi. Take first Right, onto Groton-Harvard Rd. Go straight at blinking red light. At Stop sign bear right onto Groton Rd. Hospital is on the left at the top of the hill.

From the WEST:

Follow Rt.2 E to Ayer/Harvard/ Rt.110 Exit 38 B and follow directions "from the South".

From the EAST:

Follow Rt.2 W to Ayer/Harvard/Rt.110 exit 38 B and follow directions "from the South".

Your appointment is scheduled for

DATE: _____

TIME: _____

PLEASE ARRIVE 15 MINUTES EARLY AT OUT-PATIENT REGISTRATION.

10-28-08/jat

Bone Densitometry/ Bone Density

Knowledge is the Best Defense



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What is a Bone Density (DEXA) scan?

Bone density scanning, also called dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA or DEXA) or bone densitometry, is an enhanced form of x-ray technology that is used to measure bone loss. DEXA is today's established standard for measuring bone mineral density (BMD). An x-ray (radiograph) is a painless medical test that helps physicians diagnose and treat medical conditions. Radiography involves exposing a part of the body to a small dose of ionizing radiation to produce pictures of the inside of the body. X-rays are the oldest and most frequently used form of medical imaging.

DEXA is most often performed on the lower spine and hips.

Depending on the patient's body type, Bone Mineral Density of the patient's wrist may be done due to software capabilities. This is called a peripheral test.

What are some of the reasons to have a Bone Density test?

DEXA bone densitometry is most often used to diagnose osteoporosis. **Osteoporosis** involves a gradual loss of calcium, causing the bones to become thinner, more fragile and more likely to break.

DEXA is also effective in tracking the effects of treatment for osteoporosis and other conditions that cause bone loss.

The Bone Density test can also assess an individual's risk for developing fractures.

Bone density testing is strongly recommended if you:

- are a post-menopausal woman and not taking estrogen.
- have a personal or maternal history of hip fracture or smoking.
- are a post-menopausal woman who is tall (over 5 feet 7 inches) or thin (less than 125 pounds).
- are a man with clinical conditions associated with bone loss.
- use medications that are known to cause bone loss, including corticosteroids such as Prednisone, various anti-seizure medications such as Dilantin and certain barbiturates, or high-dose thyroid replacement drugs.
- have type 1 (formerly called juvenile or insulin-dependent) diabetes, liver disease, kidney disease or a family history of osteoporosis.
- have a thyroid condition, such as hyperthyroidism.
- have a parathyroid condition, such as hyperparathyroidism.
- have experienced a fracture after only mild trauma.
- have had x-ray evidence of vertebral fracture or other signs of osteoporosis.

How is the procedure performed?

This examination is always done on an outpatient basis.

In the Central DEXA examination, which measures bone density in the hip and spine, the patient lies on a padded table. An x-ray generator is located below the patient and an imaging device, or detector, is positioned above.

To assess the **spine**, the patient's legs are supported on a padded box to flatten the pelvis and lumbar spine. To assess the **hip**, the patient's foot is placed in a brace that rotates the hip inward. In both cases, the detector is slowly passed over the area, generating images on a computer monitor. The patient must hold very still and may be asked to keep from breathing for a few seconds while the x-ray picture is taken to reduce the possibility of a blurred image.

How will I get the Results of my test?

A radiologist, a physician specifically trained to supervise and interpret radiology examinations, will analyze the images and send a signed report to your primary care or referring physician, who will share the results with you.

Your doctor may ask you to bring images with you for your follow-up or specialist appointment. If so, please inform the Women's imaging staff or call the Diagnostic Imaging Department to request that your images be prepared in advance for you to pick-up on CD or paper format. The phone number is **978-784-9000 ext. 4286**. We do request at least a **24-48** hour notice if possible.