

Bone Mineral Density Testing

Your doctor may order a bone mineral density test to assess the strength of your bones. Bone density tests can help you and your doctor see if you have more or less bone than other people your age and how your bones compare to younger people of the same sex (male or female). Ordinary x-rays are not usually used for screening; they do not show bone loss until at least 20% -30% of the bone has disappeared. Bone mineral density tests can:

- Detect osteoporosis before a fracture happens
- Discover osteoporosis if you already have a fracture
- Predict your chances of having a fracture in the future

There are different kinds of tests to measure your bone density. All of the tests are painless, quick, and safe. Usually you will be asked to lay on your back on a padded surface with your legs straight or raised on a platform. In most cases, you won't even need to get undressed!

Who should have a BMD?

- All women age 65 or older
- Women age 60-64 with risk factors for osteoporosis-caused fractures
- Postmenopausal women with a new fracture, unless already on treatment for osteoporosis
- Any patient on chronic glucocorticoid treatment

Remember to discuss your concerns about osteoporosis with your doctor. Your doctor will determine if BMD testing is indicated for you.

