

Prepare for a DEXA scan

A DEXA scan is a high-precision type of X-ray that measures your bone strength and bone loss. If your bone density is lower than normal for your age, it indicates a risk for [osteoporosis](#) and bone fractures. DEXA stands for dual energy X-ray absorptiometry. The test is noninvasive, fast, and more accurate than a regular X-ray. It involves an extremely low level of radiation.

Patient Safety Tips Prior to a Diagnostic Exam in Radiology

- Please let us know if you have any allergies or adverse reactions to medications.
- Please leave your valuables at home or in your room in the hospital.
- Please let us now if you need interpreting services, this can be arranged for you.
- Late arrival policy: If you are more than 15 minutes late for your appointment there is a possibility you may not be seen possibly rescheduled for your examination. Being seen for your appointment will be left to the discretion of your provider based on the nature of your concern and the schedule of the provider.

Preparation for the Exam

- If you are taking a calcium supplement you will need to stop for 24 hours prior to the test.

During the Exam

- The technologist will verify your identification and exam requested.
- You will remove any clothing that contains metal.
- You will lie on a table on your back and the camera will move over your body.
- You must be perfectly still during the 2 one-minute scans.

After the Exam

- If you are going home, you may resume normal activities.
- Your provider will give you the results usually within a few days.

Screening recommendations

- Any women age 65 +
- Any man age 70+

Or patients can start at 50 if:

- Your doctor determines that you're at risk for osteoporosis, based on your medical history.

- X-rays show the possibility of osteoporosis, osteopenia, or fractures.
- You're taking a steroid drug, such as prednisone.
- You have primary [hyperparathyroidism](#).
- Your doctor wants to monitor to see if your osteoporosis drug is working.
- Family history of osteoporosis
- Previous fractures with minor trauma
- White race
- Dementia
- Poor nutrition
- Cigarette smoking
- Alcoholism
- Low weight/body mass index
- Estrogen deficiency
- Early menopause (before 45)
- Inadequate physical activity
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Use of corticosteroid drugs for a long period of time (3 months)