Bone Density Screening

Normal Bone

A **Bone Density Screening**, also called a Densitometry or DXA scan, evaluates if you have osteoporosis or may be at risk for osteoporosis. Osteoporosis is a silent, progressive disease characterized by decreased bone density, increased bone fragility and greater risk of fracture. The bone density screening evaluated the calcium and other minerals that are present in the bones to determine and assist physicians with diagnosis. The higher the mineral content within the bones, the denser the bones are and in turn the stronger they are. The stronger they are the less likely they will fracture easily.

Osteoporotic Bone

Bone density tests are not the same as bone scans. Bone scans are used to evaluate fractures, cancer, infections and so forth.

Why Do I Need This Test?

In the United States, over 28 million people are at high risk for osteoporosis. Osteoporosis is a disease that can make the bones fragile and more likely to fracture. Because you cannot see or feel osteoporosis, in the past people didn't know they had bone loss until they had broken a bone.   The bone density test determine the amount of calcium and other minerals that are present within the bones and helps physicians diagnose osteoporosis and monitor your progress through therapy.

When Should I Have a Bone Density Test?

As always, please consult your physician about when you should be tested. The National Osteoporosis Foundation Guidelines recommend that all women age 65 and older regardless of risk factors should have a bone mineral density test. The test should be done if you are a younger postmenopausal women with one or more risk factors. Furthermore, if you are a postmenopausal women who presents with fractures or have stopped taking estrogen or hormone therapy. You should have the test if you are a man 50 to 70 with one or more risk factors for osteoporosis. For further clarification on risk factors, please visit www.nof.org for The National Osteoporosis Foundation Guidelines.