

UNITED HOSPITAL CENTER PATIENT EDUCATION

BONE DENSITY (DEXA) DUAL ENERGY X-RAY ABSORPTIOMETRY



Your physician has referred you to the Diagnostic Services Department at United Hospital Center for a procedure known as a Bone Density or DEXA.

The indication for Bone Density is to detect bone mineral loss, or osteoporosis. Since menopause is a contributing factor in thinning or weakening of bones, this test is generally done on women, however it may also be done on men.

After arriving in the Diagnostic Services Department, you will be escorted to the room where Bone Density is performed. If you don't wear clothing with metal or plastic over your hips or lower spine, you will not be asked to change into a hospital gown. You will be positioned flat on your back on the table. Two different areas will be scanned, the hip on your non-dominant side, and your lower spine.

For the hip scan, your foot will be turned in and strapped in place to hold it still. The entire scan will take less than a minute.

For the lower spine, you will be asked to bend your knees and place your legs on top of a rectangular sponge. This reduces the normal curvature of your spine and brings your spine closer to the table. You will be asked to place your arms over your head in a comfortable position. Two scans will be obtained, however you will not have to move. The table will move and the equipment will move over you. Both scans will take approximately two minutes. Once the scans are complete, you may leave.

Factors which would affect your bone density exam are:

1. A hip prosthesis (artificial hip) or a metal pin in one or both hips.
2. A metal rod implanted into your spine.
3. A previous barium study or a nuclear study performed within the last 7 days.

They should ask these questions when scheduling your exam, however you should also inform the technologist if any of these conditions exist.

LENGTH: Approximately 15 minutes

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