



GUIDE



Bone Mineral Density (BMD)



The Ottawa Hospital | L'Hôpital
d'Ottawa



Disclaimer

This is general information developed by The Ottawa Hospital. It is not intended to replace the advice of a qualified health-care provider. Please consult your own health-care provider who will be able to determine the appropriateness of the information for your specific situation.

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Your physician has requested an examination called a “bone mineral densitometry”. You do not need to be fasting for this examination.

What is a BMD study?

A BMD study is a simple and painless way of measuring the concentration of calcium in your bones using a computerized x-ray scanner.

Do I need to prepare for the scan?

The day of your test, please do not wear clothing with metal buttons, snaps or zippers. A sweat suit or similar outfit is ideal.

What is involved?

You have received an appointment to come to the Radiology Department at The Ottawa Hospital, Riverside Campus, where bone density studies are performed. You will be asked to remove your shoes, and then lie down on a table with a foam cushion under your knees. The scanner will pass over your abdomen and measure the density of the bones in your lumbar spine. When this is complete the cushion will be removed and your feet will be secured to a special brace in order to measure the density in one of your hips. Altogether the examination will take about 20 minutes. You will be asked to remain very still and breathe normally during the exam. The amount of radiation involved is less than half that of a chest x-ray. You may then return home with no ill effects from this study.

Will it hurt?

This procedure is completely painless. If you normally have difficulty lying flat on your back for 20 minutes, then this test may be difficult for you

Is the radiation dangerous?

The amount of radioactivity used for this test is very small and is less than most routine x-ray procedures.

Do I need to do anything after the scan?

No special precautions are needed after the scan.

What happens to the results of the scan?

Once your procedure has been completed, a nuclear medicine specialist will then review your study and the image analysis and create a report. This report is then sent to the doctor who asked us to do the study.

Is there anything I should tell the staff before the scan?

Please contact our booking office if you answer yes to any of the questions listed below.

- Have you received a previous BMD study more recent than 1 year ago?
- Do you have any metallic pins, rods or implants in your spine or hips?

- Have you received contrast media (dye) during any x-ray procedure in the five days preceding your appointment date?
- You will be required to lie flat on an imaging table with a large foam block under your legs. Will this be a problem for you?
- Do you require special assistance to lie on an imaging table?
- Do you travel by wheelchair?
- Is there any possibility that you may be pregnant?

What if I have more questions?

We want your visit to be as pleasant as possible. If you have any questions, please ask the staff in the Nuclear Medicine Division. You can telephone before your test day, or ask before the scan starts. Our telephone number is **613-761-4831, ext. 8.**

Notes