

Patient Brochure

Bone Mineral Densitometry (BMD)

What is Bone Mineral Densitometry?

Bone Mineral Densitometry, also commonly referred to as BMD, is the examination that uses a special machine to scan the lower spine and one of the hips, to assess for possible osteoporosis or reduced bone density. Osteoporosis results from loss of bone mass, leading to bone weakening and increasing the chance of a fracture.

Who is at risk of developing Osteoporosis?

Bone mass increases from infancy until about 20-30 years when normal young adult achieves peak bone mass. After this time bone mass gradually decreases with age, and this loss of bone mass is further accelerated in females related to menopause. Once bone mass falls below a certain threshold, the risk of fracture dramatically increases.

What preparation is required?

It is necessary to make an appointment for a BMD examination, although in most cases we can fit you in on the day. No specific preparation is necessary for this test. The test should not be performed within a period of 72 hours following a nuclear bone scan or within one week following a barium study (barium meal, small bowel barium follow-through or barium enema).

Please be sure to bring along any previous x-rays scans which you may have available. These films can often provide valuable additional information to the attending Radiologist when your scan is reported. All films are your property and will be returned to you.

Before the scan you will need to fill out a medical history questionnaire which assists in the assessment of your results.

What is a BMD scan like?

We may ask you to change into a gown to avoid clothing creating confusing shadows on the image. Cotton underpants without metal (eg zips, buttons) should be worn for the examination. You will be required to lie comfortably on your back on the scanner table. You will hear a humming noise when the scanner moves above you. There will be no discomfort and no breath hold is required. However, it is important to remain as still as possible for the examination.

Following the scan, the information obtained is processed by computer and reported by the radiologist.

What long does it take?

The BMD scan takes only a few minutes but the examination can take up 15 minutes to complete as we ask some questions about medical history.

How much does it cost?

The cost of the scan may be claimed from Medicare under certain circumstances. Unfortunately, these criteria are very strict and some patients are not eligible to claim a Medicare rebate and are therefore required to pay a fee at the time of consultation – this will be discussed at the time of booking.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR MEDICARE CARD AND REFERRAL FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT

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