

# BONE DENSITOMETRY

A Patient's Guide

## Osteoporosis Prevention and Treatment\*

There are steps you can take to prevent the development of osteoporosis. Even if you already have the disease, these measures, along with therapies your doctor may prescribe, can help slow its progression.

- Make calcium-rich foods a regular part of your diet, or consider calcium and vitamin D supplements.
- Exercise regularly.
- Don't smoke.
- Reduce your intake of soft drinks and coffee.
- Alcoholic beverages in moderation.
- Speak with your doctor about testing for bone density and potential fractures.

FOR ADDITIONAL BONE DENSITY INFORMATION, CONTACT  
THE \*NATIONAL OSTEOPOROSIS FOUNDATION AT  
202.223.2226 OR VISIT [WWW.HOLOGIC.COM](http://WWW.HOLOGIC.COM)



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## Osteoporosis is preventable and treatable.

Osteoporosis is often called the "silent disease," because it doesn't produce symptoms until a fracture occurs. The bones most likely to break are the hip, spine, and forearm. In fact, 1 in 2 women and 1 in 8 men are at risk for fracture or have at least one spinal fracture and don't know it. Spinal fractures caused by osteoporosis are most often painless, greatly increasing the risk for future fractures. A woman's risk of hip fracture alone, equals her combined risk of developing breast, uterine and ovarian cancer.

The diagnosis and treatment of osteoporosis begins with an objective measurement of your current bone density. Today, when doctors detect bone loss in the earliest stage, treatment is more successful. Also, several drug therapies now on the market have been shown to be effective in slowing down or reversing the bone-loss process.

## What is bone densitometry?

Bone densitometry, safely, accurately and painlessly measures bone density. An additional capability, Instant Vertebral Assessment™ (IVA), a 10-second, low-dose x-ray scan of the entire spine, allows doctors to see existing vertebral fractures, which may indicate the need for more aggressive treatment, even if bone density results are in the "normal" range.

IVA may be performed in conjunction with a bone density test, during the same appointment, and the results are immediately available for the doctor's review. In this way, your doctor can provide a more thorough assessment of your bone health...quickly and conveniently.

## What to expect during your exam.

During a comprehensive examination with DXA, you will lay comfortably on a padded table while the DXA unit scans two or more areas, usually the fracture-prone hip and spine. Unlike typical x-ray machines, radiation exposure during bone densitometry is extremely low. The entire process takes only minutes to complete. It involves no injections or invasive procedures.

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## Preparing for a bone density scan:

- Unless instructed otherwise, eat normally on the day of the exam; but avoid taking calcium supplements for at least 24 hours prior to your appointment.
- Wear loose, comfortable clothing. Sweat suits and other casual attire without zippers, buttons, grommets or any metal are preferred.
- You should not have had a barium study, radioisotope injection, oral or intravenous contrast material from a CT scan or MRI within seven days prior to your DXA test.

## Am I at increased risk of developing osteoporosis?

Your chances of developing osteoporosis are greater if you are female and answer "yes" to any of the following questions:

### Are you...?

- Light skinned
- Thin or small framed
- Approaching or past menopause
- Milk intolerant or have a low calcium intake
- Cigarette smoker
- Excessive alcohol intake
- Taking thyroid medication or steroid-based drugs for asthma, arthritis or cancer.

### Do you have...?

- A family history of osteoporosis
- Chronic intestinal disorders
- A sedentary lifestyle
- Eating disorders

For more information, please contact your doctor at Glacial Ridge Health System.

