



**QUAKERBRIDGE**  
RADIOLOGY

**Location:** The Imaging Center  
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# Bone Density Scan

## Bone Density Scan – What is a Dual Energy X-ray Absorptiometry (DEXA) scan?

A DEXA scan involves passing low energy X-rays through the bones to measure the strength and mineral (calcium) content (density) of the bones. This is used as a screening tool for osteoporosis (loss of bone mass) by scanning the low back, hip, and forearm. You are exposed to a minimal amount of radiation.

## What are Some Reasons for Having a Bone Density Test?

If you have one or more of the following risk factors for osteoporosis, you may want to consider having a bone density test:

- You have already experienced a bone fracture that may be the result of thinning bones
- Your mother, grandmother, or another close relative had or has osteoporosis or bone fractures
- Over a long period of time, you have taken medication that accelerates bone loss, such as corticosteroids for treating rheumatoid arthritis or other conditions, or some anti-seizure medications
- You have low body weight, a slight build, or a light complexion
- You have a history of cigarette smoking or heavy drinking

## Preparing for your DEXA Scan

1. There are no food and drink restrictions.
2. Continue to take medication as prescribed by your doctor.
3. Wear loose, comfortable clothing, avoiding garments that have metal zippers, belts, or buttons.
4. You may be asked to remove hairpins, jewelry, eyeglasses, hearing aids, and any removable dental work.
5. Women should always inform their doctor or X-ray technologist if there is any chance of pregnancy.
6. The examination should not be done within 2 weeks of a nuclear medicine procedure, within 1 week of any contrast study or for 48 hours following a barium study.

7. Do not take calcium supplements/antacids with calcium or osteoporosis medications for 24 hours prior to exam.
8. Patients wearing clothing without metal can have the exam without changing clothes.
9. Please remember to bring:
  - Your prescription
  - Your insurance card
  - Your referral (if needed)

## What to Expect During the Scan

A staff member will explain the procedure and you will be asked to fill out the Bone Density Form. You can download the form and bring it with you, or you can fill out the form before your procedure.

1. To begin the exam, you will be asked to lie flat on your back on the DEXA scan table and instructed to hold still.
2. Breathing instructions will be given in order to reduce the possibility of a blurred image.
3. After one scan is complete, you will be asked to raise your legs so a cushion can be placed beneath them and another scan will be taken.
4. The test is completely painless and the technologist will remain in the room with you during the scan. From beginning to end, the exam will take about 15 minutes.

## What to Expect After the Scan

There are no after effects from having DEXA scan, and you may resume normal activity immediately.

## About your Results

One of our board-certified radiologists will read the film, typically within 24 hours. Within 48 hours, a report will be sent to the ordering physician, as well as any other physician you may have requested. If you need to pick up your results, you may do so from our medical records departments or by email at [medicalrecords@qbradiology.com](mailto:medicalrecords@qbradiology.com).

Please feel free to contact our office if you have any further questions.