

# Bone densitometry (DEXA)

## What is bone densitometry?

Bone densitometry or DEXA is a test used to diagnose osteoporosis, a condition often affecting women after menopause but may also be found in men. It is also associated with certain medical conditions and medications. Osteoporosis involves a gradual loss of bone strength causing the bones to become more fragile and prone to fracture. Early diagnosis can allow treatment to build bone strength.

## What preparation is required?

No specific preparation is necessary for this test. Loose comfortable clothing is suggested, avoiding zippers, buckles and metal buttons if possible.

**Please inform booking staff or the radiographer of any recent imaging appointments involving barium, iodinated contrast for a CT scan or a radioisotope injection. Your DEXA appointment may need to be rescheduled.**

## What is involved?

A DEXA examination is a comfortable easy test that does not require an injection. You will be asked to lie on your back on a table in two different positions to allow measurement of the lower spine and one of the hips. The technique used in the test uses a very small amount of radiation. A radiographer will remain in the room for the entire examination.

## Are there any side effects?

No.

## How long will this take?

About 15 minutes.

## How do I get my results?

Digital images are immediately available to your doctor and your records will be kept permanently. This occurs through a system called PACS. **If a priority report is requested it will be issued within two hours and faxed or emailed to your doctor, however this can sometimes take up to 24 hours.**

If your referring doctor wants to see you on the day of your examination, please advise the reception staff when you arrive for your appointment, so the appropriate information can be made available for you to take to your doctor.

## How much will this cost?

The cost of this test will be determined by the clinical information provided by the referring doctor, the patient and also the interval between DEXA examinations. This is a Medicare determination. Out of pocket costs can vary between \$100, \$70 and zero cost. The radiographer will discuss cost with the patient before the start of the examination.

## Important

Bone Densitometry is only available at Cabrini Malvern, and the equipment is only suitable for patients over the age of 20. Younger patients should attend a practice or hospital with paediatric software.

**Bone densitometry should be avoided during pregnancy.**

It is important to bring with you your referral, previous x-rays and any other relevant tests (only if previous ones were not done at Cabrini or I-MED).

## Questions

For more information or to make an appointment, please contact Cabrini Medical Imaging using the number below.