

Care Gram

Bone Density (DXA or DEXA) at the Hospital

Date of Test: _____ Test Time: _____

Welcome

Welcome to the Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) Women's Imaging Center. Your doctor has requested a bone density test. This also is referred to as DXA (Dual-Energy X-ray Absorptiometry). A radiographer who is certified in the use of X-ray equipment will perform the test. A doctor who specializes in medical diagnosis by X-ray will read the test.

How the Test Works

The DXA is a form of X-ray that measures bone loss. It usually is done on the lower spine and hips. Bone density testing is the best way to diagnose bone loss and look at the risk of fractures. The test may not be able to be used on people who have had back surgery, vertebral compression fractures, osteoarthritis, or a spinal deformity. The test cannot be done on people who weigh over 450 pounds.

The test is used for these reasons:

- A post-menopausal woman not taking estrogen
- A history of hip fracture or smoking
- A post-menopausal woman who is tall (over 5 feet 7 inches) or thin (less than 125 pounds)
- A man with bone loss
- Using medications that cause bone loss (corticosteroid, anti-seizure, or high-dose thyroid)
- Type I diabetes, liver disease, kidney disease, or a family history of osteoporosis
- Increased collagen in urine samples
- Increased thyroid (hyperthyroidism)
- History of a fracture after only mild trauma
- Vertebral fracture or signs of osteoporosis

Allowing Time

The test should take about 20 minutes. You should allow more time for your visit.

Preparation

- No calcium pills or antacids for 48 hours prior to your DEXA scan
- No Nuclear Medicine study for 48 hours prior to your DEXA scan
- No barium study to include CT (oral or IV) or MRI with contrast for 10 days prior to your DEXA scan
- You may eat normally



**Licking Memorial
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Your Role

- Wear comfortable clothes without metal zippers, belts, or buttons
- If you are pregnant or think you might be pregnant, be sure to let your doctor know before the test begins
- You may have to lay in an awkward position for a short time – it is important that you lay as still as possible during the test
- Most DXA tests require that you lie flat on your back – if you feel you may need pain medication to do the test, please discuss this with your doctor prior to the test date

Registering

Please report directly to the Women's Imaging Center, on the first floor of Licking Memorial Hospital. Please arrive 15 minutes before your scheduled test time.

During a Bone Density

- You will lie on a padded table
- To test the spine and hips, your legs will be positioned to rotate your hips inward

After the Test

You may drive home and work that day.

Finding Out the Results

The radiologist will study your test and give the findings to your doctor within the next few days. Your doctor then will discuss your results with you.

One of the results will be a T score. This compares your amount of bone to a young adult of the same gender.

- -1 and above is normal
- -1 to -2.5 is the first stage of bone loss
- Below -2.5 is osteoporosis

Reminder

If you have any questions about your test, please call (220) 564-7735.