

Bone Mineral Density (BMD) Scan

Information for patients and families

Read this information to learn:

- what a bone mineral density scan is
- how to prepare
- what to expect
- who to call if you have any questions

Your bone mineral density scan has been scheduled for:

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____



What is a bone mineral density (BMD) scan?

A BMD scan uses a small x-ray beam to measure how dense (thick) your bones are. The results of this scan will show how dense your bones are compared to others your age and sex.

Osteoporosis is a disease that causes your bones to become thinner and more likely to break.

A BMD scan is usually done to diagnose osteoporosis and to assess your risk of having fractures (broken bones). Doctors also use them to see if treatments for osteoporosis are working and to check bone loss from medications or conditions that can cause bone loss.

You are exposed to a very small amount of radiation during this scan compared to a regular chest x-ray.

How do I prepare for the scan?

- You don't have to stop eating or drinking before the scan, **but don't take any calcium pills at least 2 hours before.**
- Wear loose, comfortable clothes that don't have any zippers, belts or metal buttons.



Remember to bring:

- your health card (OHIP)
- a signed form from your doctor saying they want you to have the scan (requisition form)
- an up-to-date list of medicines and supplements you are taking

Tell the technologist if you have recently:

- had a barium exam
- been injected with contrast material for a CT or MRI procedure
- had a test done in the nuclear medicine department

You may have to wait up to 4 weeks before having the BMD scan after one of these procedures.

Important: If there is any chance that you are pregnant, tell the technologist before starting the scan.

You don't have to stop breastfeeding or chestfeeding for this test.

What can I expect?

1. After you check in at the BMD reception, we ask you to fill out a medical history form.
2. The technologist measures your height and weight.
3. They may ask you to remove all the metal around the scanning areas.
4. The technologist asks you to lie down on the bone density scanning bed. You need to lie flat for about 15 minutes.
5. The technologist positions the bone density scanner over you and asks you to bend your knees and put your legs up on a foam block. The technologist will also ask you to lie very still.
6. The scanner takes a picture of your lower back. This takes about 2 minutes.
7. The technologist then places the scanner over one of your hips and places your feet in a hip positioning device. The scanner takes about 2 minute to take a picture of your hip.
8. When the technologist has the pictures they need, you can go home.

Are there any side effects?

There are no known side effects from this scan. You can go back to your normal activities once the scan is over. We will send a report to your doctor.

Who can I call if I have any questions?

If you have any questions about your BMD scan appointment, please call the unit or clinic where your appointment has been scheduled. If you need to cancel or reschedule your appointment, please contact us at least **2 days before your appointment date**.

Princess Margaret Cancer Centre

Breast Imaging Reception

3rd floor (935)

610 University Avenue, Toronto ON

Phone: 416 946 2988

Toronto General Hospital

Osteoporosis Clinic and Bone Density Lab

North Building – 7th floor (7NU-700)

200 Elizabeth Street, Toronto ON

Phone: 416 340 3890

Toronto Western Hospital

Bone Density Lab

Fell Pavilion – 1st floor (557)

399 Bathurst Street, Toronto ON

Phone: 416 603 5800, extension 6377

Toronto Rehab – Lyndhurst Centre

Bone Density Lab

Outpatient Department

520 Sutherland Drive, Toronto ON

Phone: 416 597 3422, extension 6357



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