

Bone Density Test

What is a Bone Density Test?

Your doctor has suggested you have a bone density test as part of the evaluation at National Jewish. A bone density test is a type of x-ray. During the test images are taken of your lower back (spine), hip and forearm. A bone density test will show how dense these bones are. When a person has osteoporosis the bone is not as dense, and therefore weaker than it should be. A bone density test can help determine a diagnosis early, before a person has a bone fracture and can help determine the effects of treatment.

How do you get ready for the test?

- Wear loose fitting clothing. Avoid clothing that has metal or other clothing fasteners like buttons or zippers over the areas to be measured. You can be given a gown to wear if this is not possible.
- Avoid having any barium studies done 1 week before the bone density test.

What is done during the test?

The bone density test does not hurt. The radiology technologist will explain the test to you before you start. Ask questions if you don't understand. Before the study you/your child will need to remove clothing that has metal or other clothing fasteners like buttons or zippers over the areas to be measured. You will be given a hospital gown and/or pajama bottoms to wear if this is not possible. You will lie on an imaging table. The bone density machine will scan your lower back, hip and forearm. You/your child will need to hold still during each scan.

How long will the test take?

The bone density test will take about 15 minutes. Each scan takes several minutes.

How do you get to your test?

If you are being seen at National Jewish Health, your appointment is in the Institute for Advanced Biomedical Imaging (Radiology). You will be directed where to go when you check-in. If you have any questions you can contact Advanced Biomedical Imaging (Radiology) at 303-398-1611.

Visit our website for more information about support groups, clinical trials and lifestyle information.

PTE.019 © Copyright Revised 8/2008

NOTE: This information is provided to you as an educational service of National Jewish Health. It is not meant to be a substitute for consulting with your own physician.

National Jewish Health is the leading respiratory hospital in the nation. Founded 123 years ago as a nonprofit hospital, National Jewish Health today is the only facility in the world dedicated exclusively to groundbreaking medical research and treatment of patients with respiratory, cardiac, immune and related disorders. Patients and families come to National Jewish Health from around the world to receive cutting-edge, comprehensive, coordinated care. To learn more, visit njhealth.org.