

# Bone Density (DEXA)

## *What Is It and How to Prepare*

### What is Bone Density (DEXA)

Bone Densitometry is a fast, safe, and painless test that uses advanced technology called DEXA (Dual-Energy X-Ray Absorptiometry) to measure symptoms of osteoporosis—such as low density and mineral content of bone—that may have developed unnoticed over many years.

Because osteoporosis can result in bone fractures that can cause chronic pain, disability, and loss of independence, it is important to begin treating osteoporosis at an early stage.

Bone densitometry can detect the early signs of osteoporosis so that patients can begin treating it before a debilitating fracture occurs.

During a comprehensive DEXA bone evaluation, a patient lies comfortably on a padded table while the DEXA unit scans one or more areas of his/her body, usually the spine or hip because they are particularly prone to fracturing. Unlike conventional X-rays, bone densitometry produces little radiation—less than that produced during a coast-to-coast airline flight.

Bone densitometry is noninvasive, involves no injections and, depending upon the number of areas to be scanned, can take just minutes to complete.

### Exam Preparation

#### How to prepare for your Bone Density (DEXA)

Do not take any calcium supplements or antacids for 24 hours before your appointment. This includes any calcium in pill form.

We request that you arrive at the facility 30 minutes before your scheduled appointment to complete patient registration information. We take pride in keeping on schedule. The average time for your procedure to be completed is approximately 30 minutes.

The technologist will perform the procedure and a radiologist will dictate a report to be sent to your physician. The results of all examinations will be given to you by your referring doctor. (Results cannot be given to you by the technologist.)

