

Procedures/Diagnostic Tests

Bone density scan

You are scheduled for a bone density scan. This scan helps your doctor learn the strength of your bones. It is a safe, effective, and painless way to obtain this information about your bones. The scan uses a low-energy x-ray, about the same as a chest x-ray. It is done in the Nuclear Medicine Department.

Preparation

- You may eat and drink whatever you like.
- You should not have had recent oral contrast or recent Nuclear Medicine scans before this scan. If you think you may have had such scans, please let your doctor know; your doctor will then decide whether to do the scan.

Procedure

- You will be asked to lie on your back on an examination table. Support will be given to the body part being scanned: usually the lower back, left hip, or lower arm.
- X-rays will pass through the body area from under the table to the scanner above you. The x-rays that pass through your body will be recorded and allow the scanner to determine the density of your bones.
- The scan lasts about 30 minutes.

After the procedure

No special precautions are needed.

If you have questions about the procedure, please ask. Your nurse and doctor are ready to assist you at all times.

Special instructions

Because it uses radioactivity, this scan is not performed in pregnant women. *If you are pregnant or think you might be pregnant, please inform your doctor immediately so that a decision can be made about this scan.*

This information is prepared specifically for persons taking part in clinical research at the National Institutes of Health Clinical Center and may not apply to patients elsewhere. If you have questions about the information presented here, talk to a member of your health care team.

Products/resources named serve as examples and do not imply endorsement by NIH. The fact that a certain product/resource is not named does not imply that such product/resource is unsatisfactory.

National Institutes of Health Clinical Center
Bethesda, MD 20892

Questions about the Clinical Center?
<http://www.cc.nih.gov/comments.shtml>

