

DEXA SCAN

* Your health provider has ordered a **Dual Energy X-ray Absorptiometry** DEXA Scan or Bone Densitometry. This scan helps your health care provider to diagnose Osteoporosis.

* This pamphlet has been designed by the health care professionals of Marquette General Health System to provide you with information about the DEXA Scan.

* After reading this pamphlet you should be able to discuss:

1. Osteoporosis.
2. Risk factors for osteoporosis.
3. What a DEXA Scan is.
4. What you should do on the day of the scan.
5. How you can improve your bone health.

I. OSTEOPOROSIS

* **Osteoporosis** is a disease that thins and weakens the bones. When this occurs, they can break easily. Bones in the hip, spine (backbone), and wrist are most often affected. Special cells in the body are used for making and breaking down bone material. As you age, more bone is broken down than is replaced. The inside of bone normally looks like a honeycomb. In osteoporosis, the spaces in this honeycomb grow larger. As more bone is broken down and not replaced, the inside of the bone weakens. It is not fully understood why this happens.

II. RISK FACTORS –FOCUS ON WOMEN

1. 50 years old and over.
2. Family history of osteoporosis
3. Early menopause (occurs before age 45, naturally or surgically)
4. Thin, short stature.
5. Height loss greater than 1 inch.
6. Asian and Caucasian ethnic groups.
7. Lifestyle factors:
 - Diets low in calcium and vitamin D.
 - Smoking and/or excessive use of alcohol.
 - Drinking caffeinated or carbonated beverages.
 - Lack of exercise.

8. Bone fractures.
9. Use of certain medicines in the treatment of asthma, arthritis, seizures. (This is the most common cause of bone loss in men.)

III. WHAT IS A DEXA SCAN?

* The DEXA machine uses a special, low, dose x-ray. A picture is taken of the selected bone area (s) being scanned. Your information is scanned into a computer that is connected to the DEXA machine. It measures the quality and quantity of the material inside your bones. This is called your bone density. From this information a health care provider will discuss the results with you.

* Using the DEXA scan assists your health care provider to diagnose Osteoporosis in a safe, simple, and painless way.

* Your health care provider has ordered a specific area of your body to be scanned. The hip, lower back, wrist, heel, and finger are all possible areas. The most often scanned areas are the lower back and hip. The bones in these areas are chosen because they bear the weight of the body.

IV. THE DAY OF THE SCAN:

1. **Do not** take your calcium supplement until after the scan is completed.
2. **Do not** wear clothing with metal buttons, zippers or tight elastic in the waist area.
3. **Do** bring a list of the medicines you are taking.

V. WAYS TO IMPROVE BONE HEALTH:

1. Exercise regularly, three to four days a week (walking, jogging, playing tennis, dancing).
2. Avoid smoking and drinking large amounts of alcohol.
3. Limit caffeine and carbonated beverages in your diet.
4. Get enough vitamin D, by eating eggs, fatty fish, and/or drinking fortified milk.
5. Getting enough calcium on a daily basis by eating a variety of foods listed below:
 - Low-fat dairy foods such as cheese, yogurt, and milk.
 - Canned fish with bones you can eat, such as salmon and sardines.
 - Dark-green leafy vegetables, such as
 - kale, collards, and broccoli.

- Calcium-fortified orange juice.
- Breads made with calcium-fortified flour.