

A Quick Guide to DEXA Scan



A regular bone density test is a must when it comes to maintaining your bone health, especially in the elderly. It won't be wrong to say that we often ignore bone health when we talk about the overall health of the body. This may be the reason why conditions like osteoporosis are diagnosed when they have already started to do the damage. Sometimes, surgery involving [ortho surgical implants](#) is required to fix the injury.

When it comes to performing a bone density test, one examination that comes to our mind is the DEXA scan. In this post, we will have a detailed look at the scan.

What is DEXA Scan?

A DEXA scan is a high-precision x-ray that is performed to measure bone mineral density and bone loss. If the bone mineral density is low, the risk of osteoporosis increases. Along with this, the person also becomes prone to fractures. Abbreviated for dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry, the test uses two x-ray beams at different peak energy frequencies.

The reason why two peak energy frequencies are used is that one peak will be absorbed by tissues and another by bones. This makes it easy to quantitate the mineral density. It is done by subtracting absorption by soft tissues from total absorption.

The best part about this scan is that it is non-invasive and uses low-level radiation. This test is also known as DXA or bone densitometry.

Why is DEXA Scan Performed?

DEXA scan is performed for testing bone mineral density to assess bone strength. It is also considered to be the best technique for the assessment of bone mineral density in postmenopausal women. Besides this, orthopedic specialists recommend this test as a primary examination to diagnose conditions like osteopenia and osteoporosis.

Who Needs a DEXA Scan?

A regular bone density scan is a must especially if you are above 50 years of age. While on the other hand, if you are under 50 and smoke, you must also go for bone scans. Besides this, people who have experienced fractures previously.

Besides this, the risk of bone density loss is also high in post-menopausal women, and hence, a DEXA scan is also important for them.

Above all, everyone after 30 must get their bone density check done on a regular basis.

Besides this, there are certain risk factors for osteoporosis that may arise the need for a DEXA scan:

Increasing age

Bone loss is normal with age and hence, the risk for osteoporosis increases. As a result, a DEXA scan must be performed with increasing age.

Family History

People with a family history of osteoporosis must also get regular DEXA scans to assess the risk of osteoporosis.

Medications

Certain medications like steroids and cancer drugs also result in rapid bone loss. Hence, bone density tests should be performed regularly.

Is DEXA Scan Safe?

Yes, the DEXA scan is a safe test as it is non-invasive and it uses low levels of x-ray to measure bone density. Besides this, the scan is also quick and inexpensive.

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