

Understanding Your Bone Densitometry Results

Bone densitometry is used to find out if your bones have lost density or strength. Osteoporosis (sometimes called “thinning of the bones”) occurs when bones lose mass over time; they become fragile and fracture more easily. Moderate bone loss is called osteopenia and severe bone loss is called osteoporosis.

The scan areas that provide the most information about patterns of bone loss are:

- **Lumbar spine (L-Spine)**
- **Proximal femur (Total Hip and Femoral Neck)**
- **Forearm** – done if one of the other two areas cannot be scanned, or as ordered by your health care provider.

The two areas that we routinely evaluate are the lumbar spine and the proximal femur. They are both weight bearing areas and sites that are at risk for debilitating fractures. These areas also provide reproducible results for follow-up scans.

Your test will show results for three areas: **L-Spine**, **Femoral Neck**, and **Total Hip** (or Forearm). There are three numbers for each area:

- **BMD** – Bone mineral density. The lower the BMD the greater the risk for fracture.*
- **T-Score** – A measure of the difference between your BMD and that of a young adult population of the same sex and ethnicity.
- **Z-Score** – A measure of the difference between your BMD and that of a healthy population of the same age, sex, and ethnicity.

Bone densitometry may be of limited use in people with spinal deformity (scoliosis) or arthritis. In these cases the BMD and T-Score can be falsely elevated.

On the report, under the heading **Interpretation**, you will find your T-Score for the areas scanned. You will use the T-Score to find the category you fit into.

Categories	T-Score
• Normal	up to -1.0
• Osteopenia	-1.1 to -2.4
• Osteoporosis	-2.5 and lower

If you had a follow-up bone densitometry, under the heading **Impression**, you might find the statement “95% confidence level for significant change.” This is how confident one can be that a real change has or has not occurred.

For more information on osteoporosis, visit the National Osteoporosis Foundation at www.nof.org

* This test only gives us information about the BMD. It is not a diagnostic tool for any other type of bone health.