

## What is osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis is a debilitating condition that causes bones to lose mass and become weak and brittle, increasing the risk of fractures. It is the leading cause of disability among older people, particularly elderly women, although many men also experience fractures. Approximately one in three women over the age of 50 have osteoporosis.\*

\* International Osteoporosis Foundation

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★ Locations offering bone density screening

## Understanding Osteoporosis and Your Bone Density Exam



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### How does a bone density exam work?

The exam measures your bone density and compares that number with predetermined measurements that have been obtained using a reference population whose age, sex and racial background are similar to yours.

Testing for bone density is a simple, painless, noninvasive procedure. You will be asked to lie on your back on a padded table. You will not be enclosed in any way during the exam. It is important that you relax and lie as still as possible during the exam, but you will be able to breathe normally throughout the procedure. As you are relaxing comfortably, a movable arm passes above your hip and spine. You will not feel anything during the exam. The entire procedure will take approximately 20 minutes.

### Risk Factors

Post-menopausal women are at the greatest risk of developing osteoporosis. Your risk may increase with any of these factors:

- family history of osteoporosis
- Caucasian or Asian descent
- thin or small build
- early menopause
- cigarette smoking
- excessive alcohol use
- sedentary lifestyle
- steroids and thyroid medications
- too little calcium

Even if you do not have any of these risk factors, you may still have or develop osteoporosis.

### Conditions that indicate a bone density exam may be appropriate:

- estrogen deficiency
- history of bone fractures
- diagnosis of primary hyperparathyroidism
- spine abnormalities
- steroid therapy or osteoporosis drug therapy
- female or male, over the age of 65

### Is the radiation I receive harmful?

The radiation exposure is minimal. The dosage of a bone density exam is much less than a chest x-ray. If you are pregnant, please check with your physician before scheduling the exam.

### Preparing for your exam

- If you have had a previous bone density exam, and were asked to bring the results of that exam with you, please remember to do so.
- Patients under the age of 40 are required to have an oral or written order from their doctor. Please bring a copy with you to your appointment.
- Wear a comfortable two-piece outfit without metal zippers, snaps or underwires.
- Bone density exams should be scheduled at least 10 to 14 days after any procedure involving barium (upper GI series, small bowel series or barium enema) and you must wait three days following a nuclear medicine isotope injection.
- Patients should not take calcium tablets within 24 hours of their scheduled exam.

To schedule a bone density exam  
or for further questions, please visit  
[www.ausrad.com](http://www.ausrad.com) or call (512) 453-6100.

