

Bone Density

What is Osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis literally means porous bone. In osteoporosis, poor bone density and quality can lead to bones so weak that they might break with something as simple as bending over.

How is the Heel Ultrasound Test Different From the DEXA Scan?

People often ask how the heel screening differs from the DEXA scan. The DEXA scan is a somewhat invasive full body X-ray used to diagnose osteoporosis, etc. The heel ultrasound simply requires a bare foot and has proven to be an excellent screening tool for predicting risk of hip or spine fracture related to osteoporosis. It has proven as such because, as research shows, the bone mineral density (BMD) of the heel correlates with the BMD of the spine and hips, which are the areas most prone to fracture from osteoporosis.

Consider This:

Consider the bones a savings account for calcium, the most abundant mineral in the body. Calcium plays an important role in bone structure (99% of calcium in the body is stored in the bones). A certain blood level of calcium must also be maintained for other vital body functions. Therefore, if individuals do not take in enough calcium through their diets, it will be taken from their bones! Bones are constantly remodeling—giving and taking nutrients. When the taking exceeds the giving, problems can arise.

Statistics:

Osteoporosis is a major health risk for 28 million Americans. Ten million of those have osteoporosis while the rest have low bone mass. Osteoporosis is four times more common in American women than men. Half of all women and one in eight men over 50 will have an osteoporosis-related fracture in his or her lifetime. Every year, there are approximately 300,000 hip; 700,000 spinal; 250,000 wrist; and over 300,000 fractures at other sites. One-third of all postmenopausal women suffer serious bone deterioration. Bone loss is most rapid in the first 5-7 years following menopause (up to 20% may be lost). Between the ages of 55 and 70, the average woman will have lost 30-40% of her bone mass. This means you have to establish healthy bones before it's too late!

What are the Risk Factors and Causes of Osteoporosis?

Three factors attribute to osteoporosis:

- (1) Accelerated bone loss at menopause in women or as men and women age
- (2) Below optimal bone growth during childhood and adolescence resulting in failure to reach peak bone mass
- (3) Bone loss due to disease conditions, eating disorders, or certain medications and medical treatments

Risk factors to consider include:

- Increased Age
- Female Gender
- Family History of Osteoporosis
- White, Asian and Native American Races
- Low Weight and Small Bone Structure (i.e., petite, thin build; under 127 pounds)
- Hormonal Deficiencies (primarily testosterone in men and estrogen in women (i.e., natural menopause, hysterectomy, etc.))
- Lifestyle:
 - Sedentary Lifestyle (little or no weight-bearing and resistance exercise)
 - Dietary Factors (primarily not consuming enough calcium and drinking too much alcohol)
 - Smoking
- Medications and Chronic Diseases (Osteoporosis can be caused by certain medications used to treat disorders like rheumatoid arthritis, an under-active thyroid, seizures, and gastrointestinal diseases.)

Men and Younger Participants:

In general, men are at risk of osteoporosis for the same reasons as women (see previous section on Risk Factors). These days, people living longer, and increased use of medications mentioned above, are just two reasons men have become more at risk of the disease. Today, two million American men have osteoporosis and 1.2 million more are at risk.

Our bones are under construction into our thirties. Therefore, it is not abnormal for younger participants to have low bone density readings. Before our bones are fully developed at age thirty-something, we can make an impact on our long-term bone health by ensuring we are doing what's necessary to have strong and healthy bones and, thereby, prevent osteoporosis.

What do my results mean? My T-Score: _____

T-Score	-2.5 or Lower	-2.5 to -1.0	-1.0 or Higher
Fracture Risk	High Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk
Bone Mass	Osteoporosis	Low Mass	Normal Mass

T-Score: Lower, -3.0, -2.5, -2.0, -1.5, -1.0, -0.5, 0, +0.5, +1.0, +1.5, Higher

Bone Density Study Guide

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