

Please tell your care team if you may be pregnant or if you have had a problem with this test in the past.

Bone Mineral Density Test

A bone mineral density test uses X-rays to measure how much calcium and other types of minerals are in an area of your bone. If there is a loss of minerals in your bones, it may lead to osteoporosis. This is a disease that causes your bones to become weak, brittle and more likely to break.

The amount of radiation used in this test is small and well within limits that are not harmful to you. You will have the test in the Nuclear Medicine Department. It lasts about 30 minutes.

Before the test

To get accurate test results, it is important that you do not have any of the following procedures within 7 days of your bone mineral density test:

- Tests using barium or a radioisotope injection
- Computed tomography (CT) scans with injection of contrast material
- Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)

There is no special preparation for this test.

On the day of your test, plan to arrive 15 minutes before your scheduled test time. Wear loose-fitting clothes without zippers or snaps. Be sure to bring your:

- Physician's written order for the test if you have one
- List of your allergies
- List of all your current medications (prescription, over-the-counter and herbal)
- Photo ID
- Medical insurance information
- Medicare card (Medicare patients only)

Come to the 8th Floor Reception Desk in Galter Pavilion, 201 East Huron Street.

Parking is available for patients and visitors in the garage at 222 East Huron Street, across from Feinberg and Galter pavilions. For a discounted rate, bring your parking ticket with you. You can validate your ticket at the Customer Services Desks on the 1st, 2nd and 8th floors of Feinberg and Galter pavilions, and on the 1st floor of Prentice Women's Hospital.

During the test

When you arrive in the Nuclear Medicine Department, a technologist (tech) will ask you questions about your medical history.

If you think you might be pregnant or are breastfeeding, please tell the tech before the start of the test.

During the test, you will lie on a table. The tech will take 2 scans. The 1st scan will be of your spine and the 2nd scan will be of your hip. The scans, similar to an X-ray, will take about 15 minutes. The tech will check the images before you leave the department.

After the test

You may go back to your normal activities and diet after the test.

Talk with your physician about your test results. You can get a copy of your test results about 1 week after the test from the Medical Records Department on the 2nd floor of Galter Pavilion.

If you have any questions about this test, please call the Nuclear Medicine Department at 312.926.2340 (TTY:711) Monday through Friday, 7:30 am to 5:00 pm.