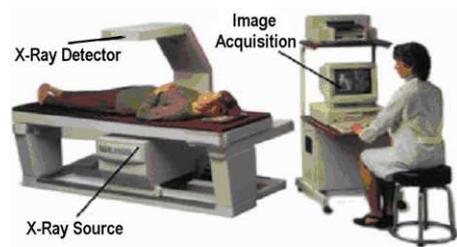


What is DXA?

Dual-emission X-ray Absorptiometry (DXA) is a non-invasive exam that utilizes low dose X-rays at two different energies to distinguish between bone and soft tissue. It is used to measure **bone mineral density (BMD)** and is considered the “gold standard” for diagnosing osteoporosis, following changes in bone density over time and determining fracture risk. The exam is usually performed at the **most common fracture sites: the spine, hip, or wrist**. The exam is **recommended for all women over 65**.



Is a DXA scan the same as a bone scan?

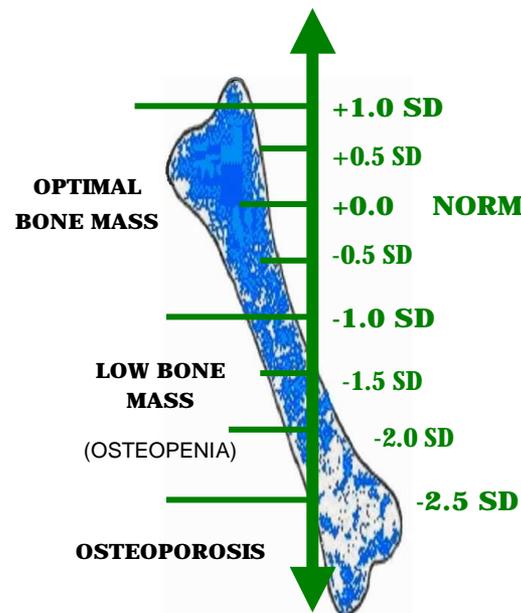
Although they sound alike, the two exams are performed differently and are used for different purposes. A bone scan is a nuclear medicine exam that looks for cancer and stress fractures and does not test BMD.



How do I read my results?

The T-score:

The “young normal” or **T-score** indicates how your BMD compares to that of a healthy 30 year-old. Peak bone density is reached by age 30 and should ideally be maintained at this level throughout your life. As BMD decreases from this peak density, fracture risk increases. The T-score is in units of standard deviations (SD) and shows whether your bones are more dense (+) or less dense (-) than those of a 30 year-old. **This is the most important value and the one that is used to interpret what your BMD means.**



The Z-score:

The “age-matched” or **Z-score** compares your BMD to what might be expected in someone your age and body size. Again, the Z-score is in units of standard deviations and shows whether your bones are more dense (+), or less dense (-) than what might be expected. At young ages, the T-score and Z-score values will be similar. However, **since low BMD in older adults is common, an age-matched comparison may be misleading**. The chart below indicates how BMD changes, on average, among both Caucasian & African-American males and females with age. BMD measurements of Asians and Hispanics are similar to those of Caucasian populations.

