

Bone Mineral Density (BMD) Frequently Asked Questions

What is Bone Mineral Density (BMD)?

- Bone Mineral Density (BMD) determines your bone health, the amount of minerals, mainly calcium in your bones.
- Proper amounts of minerals in bones keep them healthy and strong.

What does a BMD test measure?

- The test used to determine BMD can identify osteoporosis and determine risk for fractures (broken bones).
- It measures the density, or thickness, of your bones.
- The BMD test shows where you compare to people with healthy bone mineral density.

What do BMD Scores mean?

Level	Definition
Normal	T-score is between +1 and -1. Very low risk for fracture
Low bone mass or osteopenia	T-score is -1 to -2.4. Elevated risk for fracture
Osteoporosis	T-score is -2.5 SD or lower. This individual has 25% less bone mass than normal
Unusually high T-score	T-scores +3.5 or higher at risk for lead or other heavy metal exposure

What is the difference between osteopenia and osteoporosis?

- The difference refers to the amount of bone loss present. Osteopenia is less severe than osteoporosis. It's interesting to know that most fractures occur for people with osteopenia.
- Low bone density can be caused by factors such as vitamin D and calcium intake, tobacco and/or alcohol use, sedentary lifestyle, genetics, less-than-optimal bone mass during youth; a medical condition or medication to treat a condition that negatively affects bone and/or abnormally accelerated bone loss.
- Not everyone with low bone density will develop osteoporosis, but everyone with low bone density is at higher risk for the disease and resulting fractures and dental concerns.

How can I help slow down bone loss and prevent osteoporosis?

- Eat foods rich in calcium (milk, yogurt, cheese, broccoli, dark green lettuce, almonds).
- Take a calcium pill daily. Ask your doctor for a vitamin D test. Take a separate vitamin D pill daily to help keep your vitamin D blood levels between 40-60 ng/ml.
- Ask your doctor about using hormone replacement therapy.
- Ask your doctor to review medications for bone health side effects. Sometimes alternatives are available.
- Do weight bearing exercise such as walking, running or lifting weights
- Avoid tobacco and/or alcohol as both damage bones.

What should I do if I have osteoporosis?

- You should consult your doctor to determine what treatment plan the doctor recommends. Treatment plans are individualized, based on the underlying cause of the condition.
- Following the healthy habits above will help as well.

What are the treatments for osteoporosis?

- There is no cure for osteoporosis, but there are steps that can be taken to prevent, slow or stop its progress.
- It is important you see your doctor, who may want to schedule additional tests, including a vitamin D test, before a treatment plan is started. Your doctor may prescribe medication to either slow or stop bone loss or rebuild bone.
- Any treatment involves the behavior suggestions above including getting enough

We do not currently have a doctor -- what should I do?

- Talk with your SO Program as they may have resources to help connect you with a doctor or medical services for follow-up.