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When to have a bone density test?

A bone density test uses X-rays to determine the strength of your bones by measuring their mineral content and density. It is used to detect osteoporosis caused by bone demineralization. Osteoporosis needs to be treated to prevent bone fractures. Mild loss of bone density is called *osteopenia*.

Is bone density testing dangerous?

As with any X-ray procedure there is some radiation exposure, which can add up and be harmful. Therefore, pregnant women should avoid these tests.

When should you have a bone density test?

Bone density testing is recommended for those who have suffered one or more fractures without a major trauma and all women over 65 and all men over 70 who present with any of the following risk factors:

● Low body weight or massive weight loss.

● Family history of osteoporosis or of hip, spine or wrist fractures.

● Corticosteroid therapy for longer than 3 months, unless inhaled.

How often should you have a repeat test?

● 10 years if your initial bone density results are normal and there are no new risk factors.

● Every 2-4 years if you are undergoing treatment for osteoporosis or osteopenia.

When is bone density testing NOT necessary?

● It is not necessary for menopausal women with no risk factors.

● It is not useful in the evaluation of chronic low back pain or spinal deformities such as curvatures or humps that may have developed over the years.

● There are no risk factors for osteoporosis.

This information contained here is informational and not intended to replace medical advice offered by your physician. If you have any questions, please ask your doctor or call 061/Salut Respon.