

WHAT IS DEXA?

DEXA

Dual X-Ray Energy Absorptiometry



NEW ORLEANS
NEPHROLOGY ASSOC. LLC

METABOLIC BONE AND STONE CENTER

4409 UTICA ST. • METAIRIE, LA 70006

PHONE (504) 457-3687

Questions and Answers:

1. What is DEXA?

DEXA is a procedure that is used to measure a person's bone mass. The procedure takes approximately five minutes. It delivers 1/10th the radiation of a chest x-ray.

2. How Will This Help Me, The Patient, and My Physician in Their Decision-Making?

The DEXA provides information about a person's bone thickness. It is also useful to tell the physician and patient whether or not the patient is at-risk for fracture. Once the patient is treated for any evidence of bone loss (osteopenia or osteoporosis), the DEXA is used to follow the patient on a yearly or every other year basis to determine whether the patient is responding appropriately to preventive and therapeutic interventions.

3. For What Reasons May a Patient Obtain a DEXA?

There are approximately 20 approved codes that justify DEXA measurement. Some of the more common clinical indications for DEXA include the following:

- a. Estrogen/hormone deficiency
- b. Prolonged glucocorticoid therapy (greater than 7.5 mg daily in the 3 months prior to measurement).
- c. Osteopenia.
- d. Fracture
- e. Primary hyperparathyroidism
- f. Monitoring therapy for osteoporosis (this can include calcium therapy).
- g. Follow-up of anti-coagulant and anti-seizure medications causing bone loss.

All patients who are measured by DEXA may have a scan every two years for evaluation. However, if the patient is fracturing or losing bone rapidly, is receiving glucocorticoid therapy greater than 7.5 mg a day, or has primary hyperparathyroidism, the DEXA measurement may be justified every 6-12 months.