



## **What You Should Know About Osteoporosis Testing**

### **What is a DEXA Scan (Bone Density Scan)?**

A DEXA measures your bone mass. This test should not be confused with a *bone scan*. It is recommended that you have a DEXA every 2 years, unless otherwise instructed by your doctor. This test is non-invasive and does not require you to do anything to prepare for the test. Your height and weight will be measured at the time of the test, so it is recommended that you wear shoes that are easy to take off and put on. It is also recommended that you wear pants that do not have any metal (snaps, zipper, etc) on them. This test usually takes 15-30 minutes and is done in our Ocean Springs office at 3635 Bienville Blvd. It is also suggested that you arrive 15 minutes early to fill out a brief osteoporosis history form.

### **What is osteoporosis?**

Your bone is living tissue. Bone is constantly renewing itself; old bone is taken away and is replaced with new bone. With osteoporosis, cells that break down bone work faster than cells that replace bone. While you may not feel it happening, osteoporosis can make bones weak, brittle, and vulnerable to fracture. A broken bone does not have to be the first sign of osteoporosis. It is possible to detect osteoporosis early and intervene before a fracture occurs. This is why it is VERY important to schedule a DEXA and follow-up with your doctor.

#### **The risk factors include:**

- \*Advanced Age (65+)
- \*Thin (under 125 lb)
- \*Excessive thyroid medication
- \*Family history of osteoporosis
- \*Early menopause
- \*Low Dietary calcium
- \*Wrist, hip, or spinal compression fracture(s)
- \*Loss of height (1in+)
- \*Alcohol Use
- \*Smoker
- \*Chronic steroid use
- \*Sedentary lifestyle
- \*Chronic Lasix (water pill) use

If you have 3 or more of these risk factors or have had wrist, hip, or spinal fracture, please let your nurse or medical assistant know so that a DEXA can be ordered. Also remember that men are also at risk for osteoporosis.

### **Understanding Your Results**

The results of your DEXA are called a "T-Score". The World Health Organization (WHO) defines osteopenia as a T score of  $-1.0$  to  $-2.5$ . Osteoporosis is defined as  $-2.5$  or greater below the T-score. Your results will not be ready right away, so you will need to schedule a follow-up appointment with your doctor to discuss your results. Together, you will look at your T-score and other risk factors to determine if you are at risk for fracture due to osteoporosis. A treatment and/or prevention plan will be discussed at this time.

If you have any questions, please call Lorraine Jermyn at (228) 875-1849.