

Mayo Clinic Minute: What's a bone density test?

VIDEO	AUDIO
Jason	A bone density test is the best way to find out if you have osteoporosis.
Bart Clarke, M.D. Endocrinology Mayo Clinic	“It measures bone loss. It tells us how strong the bones are even if they haven’t broken yet.”
Jason	Dr. Bart Clarke is a Mayo Clinic endocrinologist. He says if you’ve never had a fracture, screening guidelines call for your first bone density test at age 65 for women and 70 for men.
Dr. Clarke	“Bone density testing is an X-ray test that takes probably 15 to 20 minutes to check both low back and hips, which are standard sites to measure. These predict future risk of backbone fracture or hip fracture. So that’s what’s being tested.”
Jason	Dr. Clarke says if your bone density is normal, your next test won’t be for another five or 10 years. But if the test shows signs of osteoporosis, you should have it done annually.
Dr. Clarke	“Having the bone density test and then maintaining good nutrition, including calcium and vitamin D, and staying physically active — those are the things that you can do to protect yourself before you get to a point where medication is needed.”
Jason	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I’m Jason Howland.