

This fact sheet provides basic information for health care providers and the public and should not be construed as legal advice. The authoritative source for OHIP eligibility is the [Health Insurance Act](#) and [Reg. 552](#) thereunder.

Bone Mineral Density (BMD) Testing

Osteoporosis is a disease characterized by low bone mass leading to fragile bones and increased risk of fractures. BMD testing measures bone loss due to osteoporosis and helps the patient and physician decide the risk of future fractures, determine the need for medical treatment and monitor the success of existing treatment.

What does OHIP cover?

Medical experts recommend that BMD testing be carried out using only the 'axial DXA' machine which scans both hip and spine. This technique is clinically superior to all other testing methods and is the only method insured by OHIP.

The 2010 Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Osteoporosis in Canada can be found at:

<http://www.cmaj.ca/cgi/content/full/182/17/1864>

1. Persons at High Risk for Osteoporosis

OHIP covers annual BMD tests for individuals at high risk for osteoporosis and future fractures.

2. Persons at Low Risk for Osteoporosis

Individuals at low risk are eligible for a baseline BMD test and a second BMD test 36 months after the baseline. Third and subsequent BMD tests for low-risk individuals are insured by OHIP once every 60 months.

Current recommendations by the Ontario Health Technology Advisory Committee (OHTAC) do not support the need for low risk individuals to be tested more often than every three to five years after baseline and at later intervals of seven to ten years when previous testing has shown a rate of bone loss of less than 1%. High risk patients (determined by the physician) will continue to receive annual access.

Individuals and referring physicians must advise diagnostic facilities of the date of any previous BMD test so that the facility can verify that the planned test is insured. The Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system may also be used by physicians or clinics/facilities to determine the date of a previous BMD test. Instructions on the use of IVR can be found at:

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/pub/ohip/ohipvalid_manual/ohipvalid_manual_mn.html

What is not covered?

The following are not insured but may be provided at the patient's expense:

- BMD testing of low-risk persons provided more frequently than 36 months after the baseline test; and
- BMD testing of low-risk persons provided more frequently than 60 months after the second and subsequent tests.

For more Information

This fact sheet includes material provided by the Osteoporosis Society of Canada (OSC). Further information on osteoporosis may be obtained from the OSC's web site: www.osteoporosis.ca

Patients should discuss their individual health needs with their family physician.

June 2015

Reference Number 018121