Bone Density Test
Mercy Women’s Center, 319-398-6821

WHAT IT IS:
A bone density test is an aid to doctors in the diagnosis of osteoporosis. A bone densitometer uses a small amount of x-ray to measure the amount of bone mineral. The computer then compares your bone mineral density (BMD) to that of a "young adult" at peak bone strength. It also compares your results to people of your same age, called "age matched." This information, along with other factors, allows doctors to gauge your risk of osteoporotic fracture. The test is also used to monitor treatment for osteoporosis and low bone density (osteopenia).

PREPARATION:
There is no special preparation required for a DEXA bone density test. It is a simple x-ray scan of the spine and both hip bones.

PROCEDURE:
1. Your bone density exam will be completed by a radiologic technologist certified in bone densitometry testing.
2. Your name, age, height, weight, and ethnicity will be entered into the computer before the test by the technologist. This information is used to compare your results to a normal reference group.
3. The bone densitometer is like a large padded examination table. You will be asked to lie on your back and will remain in your normal clothing in most cases. Belt buckles, metal or thick plastic buttons, and metal jewelry must be removed from the region being examined. The technologist will position your arms and legs for the test. You just need to lie still and breathe normally. The exam is painless and takes less than 10 minutes.
4. Your test results can be obtained from your health care provider in a couple of days. If you are diagnosed with osteoporosis or low bone density, a support group is available through Mercy Women's Center.

OUTPATIENT REGISTRATION:
Please arrive 15 minutes before your scheduled appointment time. Park in the Mercy Medical Center Parking Ramp, located at the corner of 8th Street and 8th Avenue SE. (The Level 1 South Entrance is closest to the Women's Center.) Upon entering the hospital, proceed to Level 1 and follow the signs to “Women's Center” where you will register for your exam.

Your appointment date and time: _________________________________