

Information for patients having a DEXA scan

Radiology

Information for patients and carers

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Caring for you

What is a DEXA scan?

A DEXA scan measures the density of your bones. It helps to show whether you have, or are likely to develop, a condition called osteoporosis. People with osteoporosis have weaker bones which means they are more likely to break (fracture) a bone.

A DEXA scan uses a much lower dose of radiation than a normal X-ray. It is a quick and painless scan.

Why might I need a DEXA scan?

You have been sent for a DEXA scan because you have been identified as being at risk of having low bone density.

This can happen for many reasons, such as:

- having other health conditions
- taking some medications
- diet or lifestyle factors
- family history

If you are unsure why you have been referred for a DEXA scan, please speak to the doctor, nurse or healthcare professional who referred you.

Preparing for the scan

You do not need to do anything special to prepare for a DEXA scan. You can eat, drink and take your medicines as normal.

Please contact us before your appointment if:

- you have had a CT scan or nuclear medicine scan in the **2 days** before
- your DEXA scan is due

Call **01925 665012** for advice.

What to wear

It helps if you:

- wear clothes without any metal / plastic (for example zips, buttons, belts, diamantes, etc.)
- wear a bra without underwires

- remove naval piercings should be removed before attending your appointment.

You may be asked to change into a gown if your clothing is not suitable.

What happens during the scan?

- Your height and weight will be measured.
- You will lie on your back on the scan table.
- The scanner arm will move over you to measure your bone density.

Scans are usually taken of your spine and hips, and occasionally your forearm.

Your appointment will take around 10 minutes.

Results

Your results go to the doctor / nurse practitioner who referred you.

If your GP referred you, book an appointment about 14 days after the scan.

If a hospital consultant referred you, you will either be given an appointment or may already have one arranged.

Further information

You can bring someone with you, but seating is limited.

Visitors cannot go into the scan room during the test.

If you need this leaflet in other languages, large print, audio or Braille, please call the Radiology Department on **01925 665012**.