

## The DXA Scanner

### About having a DXA scan

Your doctor would like you to come to the Royal Devon University NHS Foundation Trust Hospital (Exeter, Wonford) for a DXA scan to determine your bone density. We hope this leaflet will answer some of the questions that you may have.

### What is a DXA scan?

DXA stands for **Dual Energy X-ray Absorptiometry**. It uses a fine x-ray beam to measure the density of your bones and whether you have osteoporosis. The scan is performed on the lower back and both hips, unless you have a hip replacement or metal screws or plates in your spine.

### What does it involve?

To have a DXA scan you must be able to lie flat for up to 10 minutes, be under 149kg/23st 6.5lbs and be able to transfer onto a fixed bed at a height of 68cm (26 inches).

You will lie on the scanner bed as in the picture.



**Please try to wear loose metal free clothing. If you have a zip, button, studs etc or under-wired bra you may need to change into a gown.**

### Who will be present for the scan?

The scan will be performed by either a trained Radiographer or Physiotherapist who specialises in bone density. Occasionally Student Radiographers or Medical Students may be present to observe the scan.

### How long will the scan take?

Your appointment is for up to 30 minutes but the scan can take as little as 5 minutes of your appointment time. Please complete the enclosed questionnaire to help us to use this time efficiently.

### Do I need to prepare for the scan?

It is requested that you try to wear loose clothing with no metal buttons, zips, or studs. You will be asked to change into a hospital gown when you attend, if required.

### Is the radiation safe? (How much radiation is involved)

The amount of radiation you receive is very small. It is much less than most ordinary x-ray examinations. The dose from this scan is equivalent to one day's normal background radiation in the atmosphere.

## What happens during the scan?

After entering the scan room, you will be asked to confirm your Identity and your completed questionnaire will be checked by the Radiographer or Physiotherapist undertaking the scan. Your height and weight will also need to be taken for accuracy of your scan. You will be required to lie on your back and will be instructed on any changes to position that are required between the scans of your lower back and hips. Occasionally an additional image, taken with you on your left side will be needed, this picture takes approximately 4 minutes extra.

## If I am taking any tablets or other drugs, do I need to stop?

**NO.** Continue with any treatment as normal. There is a section on your questionnaire for any current medications, but it would be useful if you could bring a list of tablets or other drugs you are taking at the moment when you come for your scan. Make a list which includes medicines that have been prescribed by your doctor as well as any others you may be taking.

## What happens to the results?

We **aim** to report examinations as soon as possible. The results will be sent to your Referring Clinician.

You will **NOT** be told the results of your examination at the time of your appointment.

## Is there anything I should tell the Radiographer before the scan?

**YES.** If you have a hip replacement or have had surgery on your spine, and please tell us if you are, or think you might be, pregnant.

## Cancelling your appointment

If you are unable to attend for your appointment, we would be grateful if you could contact us on **01392 402926** as soon as possible. We can then offer your original appointment to another patient. A further date and time will then be arranged for you. Please be advised that if you fail to attend your appointment, it may be necessary to remove you from the DXA waiting list.

**Please note: if you have had D&V (diarrhoea and vomiting) you will need to re-book your appointment unless you have been clear for the past 48 hours.**

## Finally

**The staff in the department want your visit to be as pleasant and timely as possible.** If you find reading this leaflet difficult or you do not understand what it means for you, please call **01392 402926** and we can talk it through or alternatively you can email us **[rduh.radiologyappointments@nhs.net](mailto:rduh.radiologyappointments@nhs.net)**

## How to get to your appointment

Please refer to the enclosed "Welcome to the Medical Imaging Department" leaflet or use the Trusts website for the latest information:

**[www.royaldevon.nhs.uk/our-sites/royal-devon-and-exeter-hospital-wonford/](http://www.royaldevon.nhs.uk/our-sites/royal-devon-and-exeter-hospital-wonford/)**

For more information on the Medical Imaging Department, please visit our website:

**[www.royaldevon.nhs.uk/services/medical-imaging-radiology-x-ray/medical-imaging-eastern-services/](http://www.royaldevon.nhs.uk/services/medical-imaging-radiology-x-ray/medical-imaging-eastern-services/)**

The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if the leaflet is not used by Royal Devon staff undertaking procedures at the Royal Devon hospitals.

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