DXA scan for osteoporosis

Exceptional healthcare, personally delivered
You have been given an appointment for a DXA scan to measure your bone density and see if you have osteoporosis. This leaflet will give you more information about what to expect when you come in for your scan.

**What is a DXA scan?**

A DXA (Dual Energy X-ray Absorptiometry) scan is used to measure the density of your bones in order to see if you have osteoporosis. It uses a very low dose of radiation - less than you would get if you took a return flight to Spain, and about one tenth of the dose you would receive if you had a chest X-ray.

**What is Osteoporosis?**

Osteoporosis is a condition in which bones become brittle due to a loss of bone mass (or bone density) and a change in bone structure. This means that bones are more likely to break or fracture. For further information, you may wish to visit the website of the National Osteoporosis Society at [www.nos.org.uk](http://www.nos.org.uk)

**Why am I having a DXA scan?**

A DXA scan may have been requested for you for many reasons. For example if:

- You are a man or woman over 50 years of age and have recently broken a bone.
- You are a post-menopausal woman and are considered to be at intermediate or high risk of having osteoporosis.
- You have breast cancer and are being treated with aromatase inhibitors.
- You are taking long-term glucocorticoid treatment.
- You have a disease, such as coeliac disease that increases your risk of having osteoporosis.

**Where will the scan take place?**

The DXA scanner is on Level 1 Gate 5 at Southmead Hospital.
What happens when I come in for the scan?

The equipment we use for the dual energy X-ray absorptiometry (DXA) scan is similar to that in the picture, and does not involve you being in any way enclosed or confined; it is not an MRI scan.

The scan will take about 20 minutes. You will lie on your back on the couch while the scanning arm passes over you. The DXA technician will be in the room with you at all times.

We will usually scan each of your hips and your lower spine. In some cases, for example if both of your hips have been replaced, we may also scan your forearm.

Do I need to get undressed?

We may need you to wear a gown if there is any metal on your clothing around the areas we scan. If you can wear trousers or a skirt without a zip or metal fasteners (so with an elasticated waistband for example) that would be helpful. We also need to ask for bras to be removed before the scan.

What happens after the scan?

The results of your scan will be sent to your GP or consultant within 4 weeks of your scan, and they will advise you if any further action is needed.

NHS Constitution. Information on your rights and responsibilities. Available at www.nhs.uk/aboutnhs/constitution
If you or the individual you are caring for need support reading this leaflet please ask a member of staff for advice.