

# Bone Densitometry (DEXA Scan)

**Medical Physics Department  
Clinical Support Services Group  
Diana Princess of Wales Hospital**

**This leaflet has been designed to give you important information about your condition / procedure, and to answer some common queries that you may have.**



## Information for patients and visitors

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### What is A DEXA Scan?

A DEXA Scan is a simple test used to aid in the diagnosis of Osteoporosis. It will measure the density of your bones. In general, the denser your bones are, the stronger they are and so the less likely they are to break.

A DEXA Scan is a fast and accurate test which uses very low dose X-rays. It is preferred to normal X-rays for detecting bone density because it is more sensitive. It can measure the calcium content of your bones, which cannot be measured by normal X-rays.

The DEXA Scan can also be used to monitor changes in your bones with treatment over a period of time.

### What is Osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis is a common condition, which is estimated to affect 1 in 2 women and 1 in 5 men over the age of 50. Osteoporosis literally means "porous bones". Bones are made up of a thick outer shell and a strong inner mesh like a honeycomb structure. Osteoporosis means that this honeycomb structure becomes thin and weak causing the bones to become fragile. Osteoporosis usually causes no symptoms at first, however if you have osteoporosis, you have an increased risk of breaking a bone.

### Why Do I Need A DEXA Scan?

You have been referred for a DEXA Scan because your General Practitioner / Consultant thinks you may be at an increased risk of developing osteoporosis. Or you may already have broken a bone.

### Do I Need to Bring Anything With Me?

A questionnaire has been included for you to complete. Please fill this in to the best of your ability. This questionnaire is vital to the diagnosis of your condition so the completed form is needed prior to carrying out the scan. Please bring the completed questionnaire with you when you attend for your appointment.

### What Does the Scan Involve?

This is a simple and painless procedure, which involves you lying on a table whilst an X-ray arm passes over you. The X-ray arm does not touch you and you will not be in an enclosed space e.g. "tunnel" like machine.

The bone density is measured at your hip and spine and these measurements give a prediction of your bone density and bone strength.

The scan will take between 10 and 20 minutes.

### Do I Need Any Preparation for the Scan?

No special preparation is required however metal and other objects can affect the result of the DEXA Scan for example, zips, buckles, bra clips / under wires and body piercing.

It is advisable to wear loose fitting clothing that do not have any zips, studs or buckles on. If you attend wearing clothing that is not suitable you will be asked to remove this prior to the scan and will be provided with a hospital gown. The technologist performing the scan should be informed of any unavoidable objects for example, prosthetic implants or pacemakers. If you follow this advice your scan will be trouble free.



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## What Happens After My Scan?

The results will go back to the GP / Consultant who requested the scan. If the scan result suggests that you have osteoporosis your GP / Consultant will advise you how to deal with it. There are a number of treatments which can help reduce the effects of the condition.

## References

National Osteoporosis Society  
Camerton  
BA2 0PJ  
Helpline: 0845 450 0230  
Tel: 01761 471771  
Fax: 01761 471104  
Website: [www.nos.org.uk](http://www.nos.org.uk)

## Contact details for Further Information

If you have any further concerns not answered in this leaflet or if you cannot make this appointment please ring the Medical Physics Department on 01472 874111 extension 7587.

## Concerns and Queries

If you have any concerns / queries about any of the services offered by the Trust, in the first instance, please speak to the person providing your care.

### For Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital

Alternatively you can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on (01472) 875403 or at the PALS office which is situated near the main entrance.

### For Scunthorpe General Hospital

Alternatively you can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on

(01724) 290132 or at the PALS office which is situated on C Floor.

Alternatively you can email:  
[nlg-tr.PALS@nhs.net](mailto:nlg-tr.PALS@nhs.net)

## Confidentiality

Information on NHS patients is collected in a variety of ways and for a variety of reasons (e.g. providing care and treatment, managing and planning the NHS, training and educating staff, research etc.).

Everyone working for the NHS has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential. Information will only ever be shared with people who have a genuine need for it (e.g. your GP or other professionals from whom you have been receiving care) or if the law requires it, for example, to notify a birth.

Please be assured however that anyone who receives information from us is also under a legal duty to keep it confidential.

## Zero Tolerance - Violent, Threatening and Abusive Behaviour

The Trust and its staff are committed to providing high quality care to patients within the department. However, we wish to advise all patients / visitors that the following inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated:

- Swearing
- Threatening / abusive behaviour
- Verbal / physical abuse

The Trust reserves the right to withdraw from treating patients whom are threatening / abusive / violent and ensuring the removal of those persons from the premises.

All acts of criminal violence and aggression will be notified to the Police immediately.



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# Information for patients and visitors

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## Risk Management Strategy

The Trust welcomes comments and suggestions from patients and visitors that could help to reduce risk.

Perhaps you have experienced something whilst in hospital, whilst attending as an outpatient or as a visitor and you felt at risk.

Please tell a member of staff on the ward or in the department you are attending / visiting.

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## Moving & Handling

The Trust operates a Minimal Lifting Policy, which in essence means patients are only ever lifted by nursing staff in an emergency situation.

Patients are always encouraged to help themselves as much as possible when mobilising, and if unable to do so, equipment may be used to assist in their safe transfer.

If you have any questions regarding moving and handling of patients within the Trust, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department you are visiting.

## Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust

**Diana Princess of Wales Hospital**  
Scarcho Road  
Grimsby  
01472 874111

**Scunthorpe General Hospital**  
Cliff Gardens  
Scunthorpe  
01724 282282

**Goole & District Hospital**  
Woodland Avenue  
Goole  
01405 720720  
[www.nlg.nhs.uk](http://www.nlg.nhs.uk)



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