

Important Information

This is a general patient information leaflet only.

The information that you are given may be different to that provided here. This is because the information given to you is tailor made to your individual treatment.

It is very important that you follow the instructions that are given by your clinician.

For all enquires please call 02476 902000

Or visit our website www.globaldiagnostics.co.uk



Having a DXA Scan



What it is and what to expect



Issued July 2016



What is a DXA scan?

A DXA scan is a type of X-ray that measures bone mineral density (BMD).

DXA stands for Dual Energy X-ray Absorptiometry. DXA scans are often used to diagnose osteoporosis (when the bones become weak and fragile, and are more likely to break). They can also be used to assess the risk of osteoporosis developing in women aged over 50 and in men over 60.

How does it work?

A beam of low intensity X-Rays is used to scan the area being measured so that the bone mineral density can be calculated by scanning bones in the lower spine and hip.

It is a painless procedure. Generally, the higher the density of your bones, the less likely they are to break. The lower the density, the greater the risk of fracture and this is described as Osteopenia or Osteoporosis, depending on the severity.

DXA scanning is endorsed by the National Osteoporosis Society as the gold standard for diagnosing osteoporosis (www.nos.org.uk).

Are there any reasons I cannot have a DXA scan?

1. If you have had a recent contrast X-Ray examination e.g. Barium meal or swallow.
2. If you are unable to lie flat or remain motionless for the duration of the measurement.
3. If you are or suspect that you may be pregnant. Although the radiation dose from this scan is very low, in general, we do not scan anyone who is pregnant.
4. If you are unable to stand unaided

It is very important that you telephone the bookings team if any of the above applies

Who will perform my examination?

Your examination will be performed by a member of the Global Diagnostics Radiology team

What does a DEXA examination involve?

You will be called into the DEXA room and your identity will be checked. The Radiographer will explain the procedure to you and answer any further questions that you may have.

Depending on the clothing you are wearing you may be asked to change into a gown. If you are able to avoid wearing clothing containing metal around the spine and hip areas you may not need to change.

The scan itself is very straightforward and not at all painful. It usually takes no more than 15 minutes. You do not have to drink a special liquid, it does not involve having an injection and you will not be lying in any sort of tunnel; you will need to lie flat on your back for approximately for the duration of the scan. There are no side effects from this scan.

The scan table is unable to move up and down. The table height is 75cm (30 inches) from the floor. If you are concerned that this may be a problem, please contact the bookings team on 02476 902000.

What happens after your examination?

The images require computer analysis. We will not be able to tell you the results whilst you are here. The results will be sent back to the person who referred you. You should make an appointment to see your referrer for approximately 7 days from the date of your examination.