Bone Density Scan
An information guide
Bone Density Scan

Why Measure Bone Density?
Osteoporosis is a condition where bone is more porous than normal and therefore more prone to fracture. The condition is symptomless until a bone is broken and so it has been difficult to pinpoint which individuals have fragile bones prior to fractures occurring. With advances in technology and the development of bone densitometry it is now possible to assess bone density. Since low bone density is linked to increased fracture risk, osteoporosis can now be diagnosed prior to bones breaking, giving individuals the opportunity to take treatment and adopt lifestyle changes to reduce this risk of breaking bones.

What is a Bone Density Scan?
Your doctor has referred you for a bone density scan. The scan provides information about the strength or density of your bones, which will enable your doctor to determine whether or not you have osteoporosis.

How do we scan you?
You are scanned on an examination couch with a very fine beam of x-rays. This beam is used to scan your lower spine and then your upper thigh. A detector measures the resultant output from the beam and this data is analysed by a computer to produce your bone density score.

Is the examination safe?
Yes. The dose of radiation for both scans is less than one tenth of the dose for a routine chest x-ray.

Are you pregnant?
As with all medical procedures, you should inform your doctor before the scan if you may be pregnant.

Do I need any Preparation for the Bone Density Scan?
There is no specific preparation for this examination. You do not need to stop any of your usual medication. Please let us know if you are having a barium meal, barium enema, IVU or isotope scan in the 5 days before your bone scan.

Will I need to wear any special clothing?
It is unlikely you will be required to undress for the scan, provided you avoid wearing clothes with zips or metal hooks round your waist or hips (skirts or trousers with an elasticated waist are ideal).

How long will the examination take?
Each scan will take approximately two minutes.
Your examination should be completed within 15 minutes of your appointment. What happens next?

The data from your scan will be analysed and the results printed out, after you have left the department. These scan results and a scan report will be sent to the referring clinic who will advise you of the results and any necessary treatment.

Where does the scan take place?

You will have your scan done in the Dexa X-Ray Room which is located in J Block (8) on the ground floor. Please follow signs for the Café Royal initially.

There is no patient car parking near the department but there are Pay & Display Car Parks at the front and rear of the site. A free bus, The Royal Rover, drives round the grounds frequently during the day.

If you require any further information regarding your examination or your appointment time please do not hesitate to ring the appointments office.

Department of Radiology
Royal Oldham Hospital
Rochdale Road
Oldham OL1 2JH
Dexa Appointments
Tel 0161 778 2233
Office Hours Mon - Fri 9.00 - 5.00

Sample Scan Results

Spine scan analysis

Hip scan analysis
If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Ethnic Health Team on 0161 627 8770

For general enquiries please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0161 604 5897

For enquiries regarding clinic appointments, clinical care and treatment please contact 0161 624 0420 and the Switchboard Operator will put you through to the correct department / service

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