

**Patient  
Information**

# Having a Bone Densitometry Scan

## Introduction

This leaflet gives you information about having a bone densitometry scan, the risks involved and what you need to do to prepare for the scan.

## What is a bone densitometry scan?

Osteoporosis is a condition where mineral is lost from the bones so they become more fragile. As a result, your bones are more likely to break even after a simple fall.

A bone densitometry scan is a test to measure the density of your bones. The technique is called dual energy X-ray absorption (DXA). You should not feel any pain or discomfort during the scan.

The scan will be carried out by a Radiographer or an Assistant Practitioner.

## Risks

A DXA scan uses a small amount of radiation, equivalent to that which we all receive from the atmosphere over a period of 2 to 3 days.

This examination has been deemed beneficial for you and that the benefit outweighs the associated risks of the radiation.

If you have any questions about the radiation risk, please email: [ghn-tr.xray.appointments@nhs.net](mailto:ghn-tr.xray.appointments@nhs.net)

## Preparation for the scan

Please arrive on time for your appointment. Where possible, wear clothes without any metal fastenings such as buttons, clips and zips. Belts with metal buckles should not be worn. You must also remove coins and keys from your pockets.

If you feel you have any mobility issues which would prevent you from getting onto our scanning couch, please contact the Imaging Department on the number shown on your appointment letter before the date of your scan.

Reference No.

**GHPI0616\_04\_24**

Department

**Imaging**

Review due

**April 2027**

**Patient  
Information**

## Can I bring a relative/friend?

Yes, but for reasons of safety, only in special circumstances, will they be permitted to accompany you into the scan room.

## When you arrive

It is important to let the staff know if you are pregnant or if you think that you may be pregnant.

Please hand in your completed questionnaire to the receptionist.

## What happens during the scan?

You will be taken into the scanning room where you will be asked to lie on a couch, fully clothed, for about 10 minutes while the machine takes images of your spine and hips.

## How long will the scan take?

The process will take about 15 minutes.

## When will I get the results?

The results will be sent to your referring doctor. This can take up to 3 weeks.

## Any questions?

If you have any questions or any concerns about having the scan, please contact the Imaging Department on the number shown on your appointment letter. We are open Monday to Friday, 9:00am and 5:00pm.

Content reviewed: April 2024

## Making a choice

### Shared Decision Making

If you are asked to make a choice, you may have lots of questions that you want to ask. You may also want to talk over your options with your family or friends. It can help to write a list of the questions you want answered and take it to your appointment.



### Ask 3 Questions

**To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions if you are asked to make a choice about your healthcare.**

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?

These resources have been adapted with kind permission from the MAGIC Programme, supported by the Health Foundation

\* Ask 3 Questions is based on Shepherd HL, et al. Three questions that patients can ask to improve the quality of information physicians give about treatment options: A cross-over trial. Patient Education and Counselling, 2011;84:379-85



<https://aqua.nhs.uk/resources/shared-decision-making-case-studies/>