

### What happens after my scan?

Results will go back to the doctor who requested the scan. Results normally take about 10 -14 days. If you have not had results in this time you should contact your own doctor.

### What else can I do to protect my bones?

Even if your scan has shown you to have normal bone density it is still important to :-

- ◆ have a healthy, varied diet with plenty foods which are rich in calcium e.g. dairy products, oily fish, green vegetables
- ◆ take regular weight bearing exercise e.g. walking
- ◆ not smoke
- ◆ avoid excessive amounts of alcohol.

**It is never too late to look after your bones!**

### For further information please contact: -

- ◆ Sister Katrina Martin, Menopause / Osteoporosis Nurse Specialist on **01387 241053** (Monday – Friday)  
or via the Helpline on **01387 241121**  
Thursday mornings 9am-12midday.
- ◆ If you have any queries or wish to cancel / change your DEXA Scan appointment then please contact the X-ray Department on **01387 241435**
- ◆ National Osteoporosis Society, Camerton, Bath  
Tel: 01761 471771  
Helpline: 0845 450 0230  
Website: [www.nos.org.uk](http://www.nos.org.uk)

This information is also available on request in other formats by phoning 01387 241053

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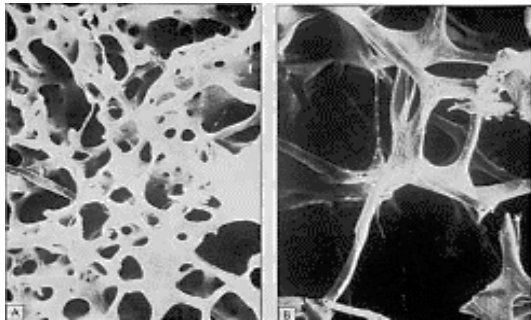
# Having a DEXA Scan



**Information leaflet**

## What is osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis literally means “porous bones”. Bones are made up of a thick outer shell and a strong inner mesh which looks like a honeycomb. This honeycomb is made up of struts of bone and osteoporosis means that the struts become thin and break which makes bones more porous and fragile. Osteoporosis is a common condition and is now estimated to affect 1 in 2 women and 1 in 5 men over the age of 50



Normal Bone

Osteoporosis

## What is a dexa scan?

A dexa scan is a simple test used to diagnose osteoporosis by measuring how dense and strong your bones are.

## Why am I being tested for osteoporosis?

You have been referred for a dexa scan because you are considered to have a risk factor(s) which might increase your chance of having osteoporosis.

## Risk factors include:-

- Breaking a bone after a minor fall (a low trauma fracture)
- Having a family history of diagnosed osteoporosis or hip fracture
- An early menopause (before age 45 years)
- Current or previous use of corticosteroids, e.g. prednisolone tablets for more than 3 months or high dose steroids
- Medical conditions which affect the absorption of food e.g. Crohns disease, Coeliac disease and Ulcerative Colitis
- Other medical conditions such as hyperthyroidism and hyperparathyroidism (overactive thyroid and parathyroid glands)
- Certain medications e.g. long term anti-epileptic medications, aromatase inhibitor medication which is often used as part of breast cancer treatment.
- Smoking
- Excessive alcohol intake - more than 14 units of alcohol per week for women and 21 units per week for men.
- Poor dietary calcium intake, e.g. through not liking or tolerating dairy products.
- Lack of weight bearing exercise e.g. brisk walking, jogging, dancing

## What does having a Dexa scan involve?

A Dexa scan is a simple, painless procedure which involves you lying on a firm table whilst an x-ray arm passes over you. It does not involve you going into a “tunnel” and the x-ray arm does not touch you.

Bone density is measured at the spine and hips and these measurements give an overall prediction of your bone density and strength. The procedure takes about 10 minutes and involves very low doses of radiation. You normally do not need to remove clothing although any metal fastenings such as zips and clips need to be away from the areas being scanned. It is therefore advisable to wear loose, comfortable clothing with no metal fastenings where possible. The scan takes place in the x-ray department at Dumfries & Galloway Royal Infirmary.



A typical dexa scanner