

Information for Patients and Carers

DEXA Scan (Dual Energy X-Ray Absorptiometry)

Decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of three overlapping wavy bands in shades of blue.

What is a DEXA Scan?

A DEXA (Dual Energy X-ray Absorptiometry) scan is a way of measuring bone density. It can give information about signs of thinning of the bones known as osteoporosis. Osteoporosis can lead to weakened bones which may be more likely to break.

For more information on osteoporosis you may wish to visit the website of the Royal Osteoporosis Society <http://www.theros.org.uk>

Please inform us before you attend:

- If you require ambulance transport
- If you are or think you may be pregnant
- If you are breastfeeding
- If you weigh over 200kg (31 ½ stone)
- If you have problems standing and/or need a hoist to transfer
- If you have problems with your mobility
- If you have had a DEXA scan within the last 2 years
- If you are due to have a Nuclear Medicine scan, CT scan or Barium X-ray study within two weeks prior to your appointment for a DEXA scan
- If you require an interpreter



Preparation for the scan

There are no special preparations for a DEXA scan so you can eat, drink and take any medication as normal. It would be helpful if you could wear clothes without zips, buttons, fasteners, belts or diamantes on to minimise the need to get changed for the examination. Also, if possible do not wear an underwired bra. If you have a navel piercing, please ensure it is removed prior to attending.

Can I bring a relative or friend with me?

A relative or friend can accompany you to the appointment but they will usually not be allowed into the room when you have your examination. Please note that as we have limited seating and do not have child care facilities, you are advised not to bring small children with you to your appointment. If you are unable to avoid this, please contact us in advance of your appointment.

What happens when I arrive?

Please report to the reception desk at the Preston Healthport Community Diagnostic Centre, Vicarage Lane, Fulwood, PR2 8DW to book in for your appointment.

What happens during the examination?



The radiographer will check whether you will need to change for your scan and will provide you with a gown if necessary. You will be weighed and will have your height measured before you are scanned.



You will be asked to lie on your back on the scanner table and the scanner arm will pass over you to measure the bone density in your hip and spine. You will be required to move into different positions for each scan (see pictures for examples).

Each scan lasts approximately two minutes. The radiographer will stay in the room with you during the scans. In some circumstances the forearm and full spine is also scanned. The appointment will take approximately 20 minutes.

Is it safe to have a DEXA scan?

There are some small risks involved with X-rays but only the minimum amount of radiation is used to produce the images required. We use the smallest dose possible, in line with national regulations, to provide as much information as we can about your condition. This allows the doctors to make an accurate diagnosis to help plan your treatment, so the benefits of having the X-ray far outweigh the radiation dose you will receive.

After the scan

The scans will be checked to ensure they provide all the information required and you will then be able to leave the department.

Your results

The scans will be analysed after your visit. You will be advised when you attend about how to receive your results.

Contact Information

If you require any further advice or information please contact the DEXA booking team on **01772 523148**.

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

www.patient.co.uk

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware

www.theros.org.uk Royal Osteoporosis Society

Further information about radiation:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ionising-radiation-from-medical-imaging-examinations-safety-advice/exposure-to-ionising-radiation-from-medical-imaging-safety-advice>

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www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

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Lancashire Teaching Hospitals is a smoke-free site. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on any of our premises, either inside or outside the buildings. Our staff will ask you about your smoking status when you come to hospital and will offer you support and advice about stopping smoking this will include Nicotine Replacement Therapy to help manage your symptoms of withdrawal and the opportunity to speak to a nurse or advisor from the specialist Tobacco and Alcohol Care Team.

If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact Smokefree Lancashire on Freephone **08081962638**.

Please ask a member of staff if you would like help in understanding this information.

This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.

Our patient information group review our leaflets regularly, if you feel you would like to feedback on this information or join our reading group please contact on email address:

patientexperienceandinvolve@LTHTR.nhs.uk

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Division: Diagnostics and Clinical Support

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