

Preparing for Bone Densitometry Scanning

Unless instructed otherwise, eat normally on the day of the examination; but avoid taking calcium supplements for at least 24 hours prior to your appointment.

Wear loose, comfortable clothing – sweatsuits and other casual attire without zips, buttons, press studs or any metal.

You should not have had a barium study, radioisotope injection, oral or intravenous contrast material from a CT scan or MRI within seven days prior to your DEXA test.

How DEXA Bone Densitometry Works

1. THE EQUIPMENT

DEXA is a fast, convenient and precise way to measure bone density to help diagnose and determine the risk of developing osteoporosis and future fractures.

2. BONE DENSITY SCAN AND ANALYSIS

Most common examination sites are fracture-prone hips and the lower spine. Bone Mineral Density (BMD) is calculated and compared to normal BMD values, matched for age and sex. A low BMD by DEXA may predict the likelihood of osteoporosis and fracture and can help determine a treatment plan.

3. THE REPORT

The DEXA system produces a report instantly. Along with information you provide about your family and medical history, lifestyle and diet, the data derived from the DEXA test will be used by your doctor to help determine whether you are at high, increased or low risk of fracturing a bone. Based on this information, they can decide whether you would benefit from additional therapy.

How to find us

31 Old Broad Street EC2N 1HT is situated on Old Broad Street in the heart of the City and next to Tower 42 (formerly the NatWest Tower).



To book an appointment please contact:

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Osteoporosis Diagnostic and Treatment Centre

at

31 Old Broad Street

A patient's guide to Bone Densitometry

A quick, convenient and painless method of assessing your Bone Density Level

What is Osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis means 'porous bones'. Bones are made up of a thick outer shell and a strong inner honeycomb mesh of small struts of bone. Osteoporosis means some of these struts become thin or break, which makes the bone fragile and prone to fracture. It is often called 'the silent disease', as symptoms are not always evident until a fracture occurs. The bones most likely to break are the hip, spine and forearm.

One in three post-menopausal women will experience an osteoporosis-related fracture. In fact, a woman's risk of hip fracture alone – the most painful and debilitating fracture of osteoporotic features – equals her combined risk of developing breast, uterine and ovarian cancer.

One in two women and one in five men over the age of 50 in the UK will break a bone, mainly because of osteoporosis. Half of all women past menopause have, or are at high risk of developing osteoporosis.

The cost of osteoporosis, both to individuals and the economy is enormous. The 230,000 fractures that occur each year as a result of osteoporosis cost the health and social services more than £1.8 billion annually.*

The personal consequences of untreated osteoporosis may be a loss of independence, pain, deformity and disability.

Am I at Increased Risk of Having Osteoporosis?

Your chances of developing osteoporosis are greater if you answer 'yes' to any of the following questions:

Are you...?

- Fair-skinned
- Approaching or past menopause
- A smoker
- Taking medication for thyroid disorders, asthma, cancer or steroid-based drugs for arthritis
- Thin or small-framed
- Milk intolerant or have a low calcium intake
- Drinking alcohol in excess
- Hypogonadic – have low levels of testosterone

Do you have...?

- A family history of osteoporosis
- A sedentary lifestyle
- A chronic intestinal disorder

The Good News!

Osteoporosis is Preventable and Treatable

Today, doctors are better able to detect and treat low bone density in its earliest stages. This can help prevent the disease or lessen its impact. Several drug therapies now on the market have been shown to be effective in slowing down or reversing the bone loss process.

Just as no doctor would prescribe a medication for high blood pressure without first taking the patient's blood pressure, the diagnosis and treatment of osteoporosis should begin with an objective review of your current bone status.

Osteoporosis Prevention and Treatment

Fortunately, there are steps you can take to prevent the development of osteoporosis. Even if you already have the disease, these measures – along with therapies your doctor may prescribe – can help slow down its progression.

- Make calcium-rich foods a regular part of your diet.
- If you don't eat the recommended amount of calcium, consider calcium and vitamin D supplements.
- Exercise regularly. Walking, jogging and other weight-bearing activities are especially beneficial.
- Don't smoke.
- Drink alcoholic beverages in moderation.
- If you are post-menopausal, talk to your doctor about hormone (oestrogen) replacement therapy.

Bone Densitometry

Using an advanced technology called DEXA (short for Dual-Energy X-ray Absorptiometry), Bone Densitometry can safely, accurately and painlessly measure bone density. During a comprehensive examination with DEXA, the patient lies comfortably still on a padded table while the DEXA unit scans two or more areas, usually the fracture-prone hips and spine.

Radiation exposure during Bone Densitometry is extremely low – less than the radiation exposure during an airline flight. The entire process takes only 30 minutes to complete, depending on the number of sites scanned. It involves no injections or invasive procedures.

Bone Densitometry Using DEXA

- **Simple, proven X-ray method.**
- **Safe, low radiation.**
- **Helps determine whether you have osteoporosis, or are at risk of developing osteoporosis.**
- **Fast and comfortable, only takes 30 minutes.**
- **Painless, non-invasive, no injections.**

*Source: National Osteoporosis Society Research and Development Strategy 2007