



**Royal Berkshire**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Having a **DEXA scan**

Information for patients

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**This leaflet explains what a bone density (DEXA) scan is, why you may need one, and where to go for the scan.**

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## **Why do I need a DEXA scan?**

A DEXA scan is used to diagnose, or assess your risk of developing, osteoporosis. Osteoporosis weakens the bones, making them more likely to break after a minor fall or knock.

In the UK, 1 in 2 women and 1 in 5 men over 50 will have a fragility fracture.

You may be offered a scan if you are over 50 with risk factors, or under 50 with additional risks, such as smoking, other medical conditions, or previous fractures.

Early diagnosis matters, as treatment for osteoporosis can significantly reduce the risk of further fractures.

## **What is a DEXA scan?**

A DEXA (Dual Energy X-ray Absorptiometry) scan is an accurate test to measure bone density. It is endorsed by the Royal Osteoporosis Society as the 'gold standard' for diagnosing osteoporosis.



## **Are there any risks of having a DEXA scan?**

DEXA is considered to be safe and the radiation dose is considerably less than a standard chest X-ray (a DEXA is equivalent to  $\frac{1}{10}$  of a standard chest X-ray).

## Who should not have a DEXA scan?

- Those who are or may be pregnant.
- If you have had an X-ray, CT or MRI examination **using contrast/dye, or a nuclear medicine scan**, e.g. of bone or thyroid, in the past few weeks **please let us know** before the scan.

## Do I need to fast or stop any medication beforehand?

You do not need to stop food or fluid and can continue to take all your tablets or medication as normal.

## About the scan

The DEXA scan is performed for NHS patients at the Berkshire Independent Hospital (BIH) in Reading and at the West Berkshire Community Hospital (WBCH) in Thatcham.

Your DEXA scan will be performed at:	BIH <input type="checkbox"/>	WBCH <input type="checkbox"/>
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**When booking, let us know if you need more time for your appointment.**

## Attending for the scan

You are welcome to bring a relative, partner or friend with you but they will be asked to wait outside the scan room while you are scanned.

Please wear clothes with no metal in the hips/tummy/chest area, so **no jeans, no zips and no underwired bras**. Also, avoid clothes with metal fastenings and embellishments – and empty your pockets of any metal. We cannot scan you if you have a navel piercing but other jewellery and watches are ok.

**If you have been given a questionnaire, please hand in your completed form to the radiographer on arrival.**

The scan takes around 15 minutes, is completely painless and you'll be able to go home immediately afterwards. Before the scan, we will measure your height and weight in order for the computer to more accurately calculate your expected bone density.

We will then ask you to lie very still on your back on the scanner-table.

## **How do I get the results of the scan?**

The results of your scan will be reviewed by a member of the referral team. A report, along with further advice will be sent to your GP and your hospital consultant.

We look forward to seeing you at your scheduled time for your NHS DEXA scan; if you need to reschedule it, please contact the scanning team on the numbers at the end of this leaflet.

## **Contacting us and where to find us**

### **For Berkshire Independent Hospital (Reading):**

Berkshire Independent Hospital, Swallows Croft, Wensley Road, Reading RG1 6UZ. Tel: 0118 902 8000/8151 or

Email: [info@royalberkshireimaging.co.uk](mailto:info@royalberkshireimaging.co.uk)

Visit <https://www.ramsayhealth.co.uk/hospitals/berkshire-independent-hospital/about-us> for directions.

### **For West Berkshire Community Hospital:**

West Berkshire Community Hospital, London Road, Benham Hill, London Road, Thatcham RG18 3AS. Tel: 01635 273 300

Visit <https://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/our-locations/west-berkshire-community-hospital> for directions.

Please book in at RADIOLOGY on the ground floor and sit in the waiting room shared with physiotherapy.

To find out more about our Trust visit [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

**Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.**

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