

Patient Information

## Radiology Department (Rugby St Cross)

### DEXA scan (bone density scan)

The following information will help you prepare for your upcoming visit to the X-ray department at **Rugby St Cross Hospital**.

We aim to make you feel welcome and make your visit as pleasant as possible. If you feel unhappy with any part of your care within the X-ray department, please ask to speak to the lead radiographer.

#### Points to remember

- This appointment is at **Rugby St Cross Hospital**, X-ray Department
- Within our Trust, this is the only available scanner
- If you are on medication from your doctor, please continue to take it as normal
- We also ask you to leave any valuable possessions at home.
- If you have had an X-Ray contrast study within the past 4 weeks, please contact the Radiology Department. You may need to rearrange your appointment.

#### Why should I have a DEXA scan?

Bone density scanning is used to screen patients as a preventative measure or to detect specific conditions such as osteoporosis.

Osteoporosis is a condition in which the bones retain their original shape but lose their density making them brittle and weak.



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Osteoporosis affects more women than men, and the rate of bone density loss is greatest following the menopause, because of decreased levels of oestrogen. Bone density can be lost at a rate of 5% a year, and by the age of 70 can be reduced to 50% of pre-menopausal levels.

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

A bone density scan is a diagnostic technique used to assess bone mineral content and density.

Increasing evidence and awareness of osteoporosis has led to advanced techniques being introduced, the most precise of which is a system which uses dual energy X-rays.

These X-rays pass through the body in a fine beam. Information about the bone density is fed into a computer incorporated into the system.

The analysed results are compared with normal ranges, and this will show whether you may develop osteoporosis in later life.

### **On arrival at the Radiology/X-Ray Department**

Please report to the reception desk, where you will be directed to one of our waiting areas. You will be shown to a private cubicle and asked to undress and put on an X-ray gown (you may wear your own dressing gown over this while waiting if you wish).

### **During your scan**

The scan itself does not involve a tunnel and is a simple procedure. The areas scanned are usually the lower (lumbar) spine and hip.

You will lie on your back with your legs elevated on a pad for the spine scan. For the hip scan, your legs will be repositioned and supported. Each scan takes about 8 minutes, so appointments are booked to allow us 15 minutes per patient. Unfortunately, we may not be able to accommodate late arrivals.

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### Risks

X-rays are a type of radiation. We are all exposed to natural background radiation every day of our lives. This comes from the sun, food we eat, and the ground.

Exposure to X-rays carries a small risk, but your doctor feels that this risk is outweighed by the benefits of having the test. We will take all safeguards to minimise the amount of X-rays you receive.

### Safety

**Patients aged 12 to 55 years:** the risks of radiation are slightly higher for an unborn child, so you will be asked to confirm that you are not pregnant before the examination can proceed.

### Contraindications

The DEXA scan would have to be delayed if you have had a recent isotope or X-Ray study using contrast. For example, barium, to allow the contrast used in the previous examination to pass out of the body. If you have any doubts, please contact us.

### After your scan

The scan has no aftereffects. You may return to normal activity immediately.

### How do I get the results?

The results will be sent to the doctor who referred you to us for this examination.

### Other sources of information:

- For general information about radiology departments visit the Royal College of Radiologists website: [www.goingfora.com](http://www.goingfora.com)
- For information about the effects of X-rays read the NRPB publication: "X-rays how safe are they?" on the Health Protection Agency website: [www.hpa.org.uk](http://www.hpa.org.uk)

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Please note that the views expressed in these websites do not necessarily reflect the views of UHCW NHS Trust or the NHS.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact the telephone number on your appointment letter and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

### Did we get it right?

We would like you to tell us what you think about our services. This helps us to make further improvements and to recognise members of staff who provide a good service.



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[www.uhcw.nhs.uk/feedback](http://www.uhcw.nhs.uk/feedback)

#### Document History

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