

# Information about your Bone Density Scan

**Bone densitometry service**



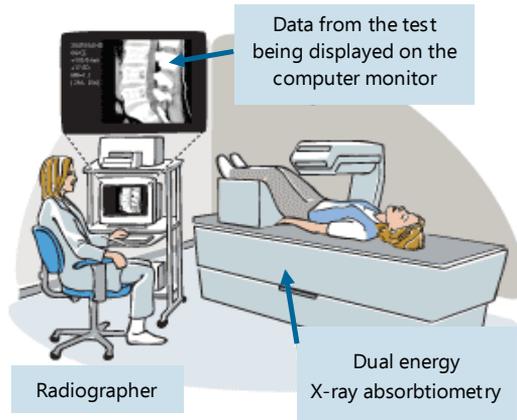
**01935 384 576**  
[yeovilhospital.nhs.uk](http://yeovilhospital.nhs.uk)

## What is a bone densitometer?

This is a scanning machine that measures your bones to diagnose their strength and assess the risk of you having a fracture.

## Which bones are scanned?

Your lower spine and one hip.



Occasionally, your whole skeleton and sometimes the wrists are scanned for special reasons.

## Is the dose of radiation high?

No. One of the main advantages is that the radiation exposure is extremely small. The amount is approximately ten per cent of that needed for a chest x-ray, which roughly equates to flying over the Alps.

## Do I need to go in a tube?

No. You are not enclosed at all so there is no need to worry about being in a small space.

## How is the scan performed?

You lie on a couch, with your legs bent at the knees and resting on a support for the spine scan; your legs are straight and slightly turned inwards for the hip scan. The scanner arm will pass over your lower spine and hips several times during the scan.

## Do I need to undress?

No. Everyday loose fitting clothes, apart from jeans, are best. You should not wear metal zips, buckles and denim as they are 'dense' and will interfere with the measurements. Ladies - if your bra is under-wired please be prepared to remove it for the examination.

## How long does the scan take?

It takes just a few minutes for each site scanned but we allow 20 - 25 minutes for an appointment so that your height, weight and background details can be recorded. This also ensures you can be positioned comfortably on the couch and it gives time for queries to be answered and general information about bone health to be provided.

There are lots of leaflets available in the unit which you might find helpful.

## When are the results available?

The results are usually sent out two to three weeks after the scan, unless your doctor has asked for advice in which case it may take a little longer.

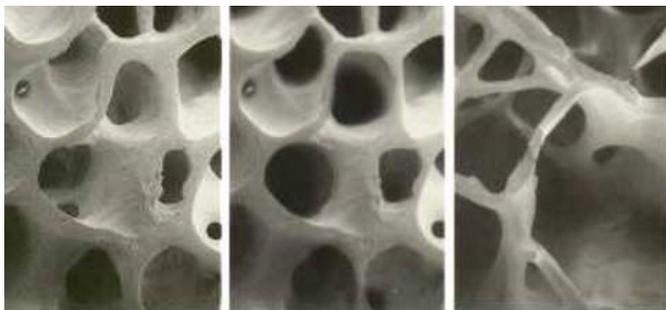
## Who are the results sent to?

A report is sent to the doctor who requested the scan.

## What do the results show?

The quality of your bone is compared with a normal range of bone strength for other people of the same age, and with the amount lost since young adult values.

Your risk of current and future fractures can be predicted and, broadly, the scans show whether your bones are normal, thinning (osteopenic) or of abnormally low strength, ie. osteoporotic. This can then guide any treatment you might need.



Normal

Thinning

Osteoporotic

## Information sessions

The Osteoporosis nurse specialist runs information sessions two or three times a year at Yeovil Hospital which you can attend. For more details of these sessions call 01935 384 569.

## Further information

### National Osteoporosis Society

The society runs a telephone helpline between 9am and 5pm on weekdays

Tel: 0808 800 0035

[www.nos.org](http://www.nos.org)

### Arthritis Research UK

Arthritis Research UK has information on the website including a leaflet on osteoporosis that you can download or order by post:

Arthritis Research UK  
Copeman House  
St Mary's Gate  
Chesterfield  
Derbyshire  
S41 7TD

Tel: 0300 790 0400

Fax: 0300 790 0401

Web: [www.arthritisresearchuk](http://www.arthritisresearchuk)

Email: [enquiries@arthritisresearchuk.org](mailto:enquiries@arthritisresearchuk.org)

**If you would like this leaflet in another format or in a different language, please ask a member of staff.**

