

PREPARATION INSTRUCTIONS

Preparing for your DEXA bone density scan

A DEXA scan is a quick, painless scan that measures the strength of your bones – usually your hip and lower spine – using a very low dose of X-ray. It's the standard way to check for bone thinning (osteoporosis). Your scan is done at an I-MED Radiology clinic, with just a couple of things to do beforehand.

**10–20 min**

a short appointment

**Very low dose**

minimal X-ray

**No fasting**

eat & drink normally

1 How it works

- 1 We email your i-screen referral** along with instructions for your scan.
- 2 Book your scan at a local I-MED Radiology clinic** – choose a location and time that suit you.
- 3 Get your results.** Your scan is reviewed by a qualified medical professional and appears in your secure i-screen dashboard, and is sent to your referring clinician.

2 Before your scan

- **Stop calcium supplements for 24 hours before.** This includes calcium tablets, multivitamins and calcium-containing antacids – a tablet in your gut can inflate the reading. Calcium-rich foods are fine.
- **No fasting** – eat and drink normally, and keep taking your other prescription medicines as usual.
- **Wear loose, metal-free clothing.** Avoid zips, metal buttons, belts and underwire bras around your hips and spine, and keep jewellery, keys and your wallet out of the scan area. You may be asked to change into a gown.
- **Recent CT-with-contrast, barium study or nuclear medicine scan?** Tell the clinic when you book – you may need to wait 1–2 weeks, as contrast or tracer can interfere with the reading.
- **Bring your i-screen referral** and your Medicare card to the clinic.

Tell the team if you could be pregnant. A DEXA scan uses a small dose of X-ray, so it's not done during pregnancy. Let the clinic know beforehand if there's any chance you could be pregnant.

3 On the day

The scan is painless, takes about 10–20 minutes, and you stay fully clothed (in metal-free clothing or a gown).

- 1 You lie on your back on a **padded, open table** – there's no tunnel and nothing encloses you. Your legs may be rested on a padded block.
- 2 A **scanning arm passes slowly over your hip and lower spine** while you stay still and breathe normally. There are **no injections**.
- 3 That's it – you can get up, dress and **return to normal activity** straight away.

4 Your results

Your scan is reviewed by a qualified medical professional and your report appears in your secure i-screen dashboard with a clear explanation. It's also sent to your referring clinician.

What the scores mean. Your report gives a **T-score**, which compares your bone density with a healthy young adult and is used to identify bone thinning (osteopenia) or osteoporosis, and often a **Z-score**, which compares you with others your age and sex. They're read alongside your other risk factors – not every low score needs treatment – so talk your result through with your doctor.

Keeping track over time. Bone density changes slowly, so if you have repeat scans it's best to have them at the same clinic on the same machine, where you can, so the results compare accurately.

The scan uses a very low dose of radiation – a fraction of a standard X-ray. Questions before your scan? Email us at info@i-screen.com.au and the team will be glad to help.