

# Bone density scanning

A patient's guide

## **Why am I having a bone density scan?**

The scan is to determine whether or not you have osteoporosis (thinning of the bones). If you do have osteoporosis then life style advice can be given to improve your bone health. Sometimes bone strengthening medicines are also advised.

Measurements are usually made at the hip and the spine. The machine uses X-rays but the radiation dose is extremely low, being approximately one quarter of that received from a chest X-ray. The scan is completely painless.

During the scan you will be asked to lie on your back on the scan couch. The scan takes between 5-10 minutes to complete. The radiographer will remain in the room with you at all times.

You may eat and drink as normal before the scan and may continue to take your usual prescription drugs.

Although the radiation dose is very low, we prefer not to do this measurement if you are pregnant or are breast feeding. If you are pregnant or breast feeding please contact us and we will re-schedule the scan.

When you come for your scan, please make sure that you wear comfortable clothing that is metal free (zips, hooks and eyes etc) especially around the waist area. You may be asked to remove items such as an underwired bra, jeans or piercings. Hospital gowns will be provided should you need to change.

It is important that you complete the questionnaire and bring it with you to your appointment to enable us to give advice on how to improve your bone health.

After your scan, a consultant will send the results to the doctor who referred you within two weeks.

Please do not hesitate to contact the number provided opposite about any concerns you may have about this procedure.

If we are unable to take your call, please leave a voice mail message and a member of the team will return your call as soon as possible.

**Bone Density Unit**

Tel: 01480 364528 (direct line)

**Office hours**

Tuesday/Thursday  
08.45-17.00hrs

**Out of hours**

Please leave voicemail

**To change an appointment or cancel**

Tel: 01480 364843  
Monday to Friday  
09.00-16.30hrs

**Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust**  
Papworth Everard, Cambridge, CB23 3RE

Tel: 01480 830541

Fax: 01480 831315

[www.papworthhospital.nhs.uk](http://www.papworthhospital.nhs.uk)

A member of Cambridge University Health Partners



**SMOKEFREE**

Papworth Hospital is a smokefree site



Keep in touch with Papworth Hospital and receive a quarterly newsletter. Join our membership free of charge at [www.papworthmembership.com](http://www.papworthmembership.com)

Tel: 01480 364657

Author ID: Principal Radiographer  
Department: Radiology  
Reprinted: December 2012  
Review due: December 2014  
Version: 3  
Leaflet number: PI 85

© Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Large print copies and alternative language versions of this leaflet can be made available on request.