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# ***Fracture Liaison Services and DXA bone scan***

***Information for  
patients and carers***

**Grampian Osteoporosis Service  
Ashgrove House  
Aberdeen Royal Infirmary  
Aberdeen, AB25 2ZA**



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

Fractures in men and women over the age of 50 years can be as a result of bone thinning (a condition called osteoporosis).

If your bones are thinning this means that you are almost twice as likely to have more fractures in the future (including hip and spinal fractures) and may need medications which can help to reduce this risk.

If you're aged 50 or over and break, crack or chip a bone (all of these terms mean a broken bone) a DXA bone scan can assess your risk of future fractures.

## ***What is osteoporosis? Should I be worried?***

Osteoporosis is a common condition with 1 in 2 women and 1 in 5 men over 50 having a fracture. Osteoporosis occurs when the structure of the bone becomes thin and so more fragile.

Osteoporosis isn't a painful condition as we don't feel the loss of bone. However, the broken bones we get from osteoporosis can cause pain and sometimes other problems (including difficulty with mobility and doing daily activities).

Broken bones will usually heal normally but a broken hip or spinal fracture can have a major impact on your independence.

### ***What is a low trauma or fragility fracture?***

This is when bones break, often following mild trauma such as a bump or fall. This is called a **low trauma or fragility fracture**.

**Fractures that occur as a result of trauma are not typically due to osteoporosis. For example, a road traffic collision or a fall from height e.g. a ladder or cycle.**

### ***What bones are commonly broken if you have osteoporosis?***

Wrist, hip, spine and pelvic fractures are most commonly related to osteoporosis. However, any bone that breaks easily in men and women aged over 50 is likely to be related in some way to bone fragility.

**We don't usually include skull, hand, fingers and toes, foot or rib fractures as they are often caused by trauma.**

## ***Might I be asked to start treatment without a DXA bone scan?***

In those aged 75 years and over who have a low trauma fracture, we recommend that treatment be commenced for a 5 year period **without a DXA Bone scan**. This is because these individuals are at highest risk of further fracture.

## ***What is a Fracture Liaison Service (FLS)?***

Fracture liaison service (FLS) identifies people aged 50 and older who have had a low trauma or fragility fracture. The aim is to identify those at high risk of fracture by doing a DXA scan and, if required, recommend treatment to reduce that risk.

## ***Do I need a DXA scan if I'm already taking a bone treatment?***

We would repeat your DXA bone scan sooner than previously recommended **but not until 2 years have passed since your last DXA scan**.

## ***I don't think I had a low trauma fracture. What should I do?***

If your broken bone was as a result of some trauma such as a fall from a step ladder or a bicycle or a road traffic collision a DXA scan isn't required.

**Please let us know that you don't need a scan so we can offer your appointment to someone else.**

**To cancel your appointment, please contact:**

**Email:    gram.osteoporosis@nhs.scot**

**☎:         01224 559970 or 559971**

Please quote your name, date of birth or CHI number (this is on your invitation letter).

### ***Where are the scanners situated?***

The DXA scanners are situated at the Grampian Osteoporosis Service, Ground Floor, Ashgrove House, Foresterhill, Aberdeen, AB25 2ZA. We also have a mobile DXA scanner.



A DXA scanner

## ***How can you measure bone density?***

The most common way to measure your bone density is Dual Energy X-Ray Absorptiometry (DXA). This is the most accurate and reliable way of assessing the strength of your bones and their future risk of fractures (broken bones).

## ***Is a DXA scan safe?***

**Yes.** It involves a relatively small radiation dose which is similar to natural background radiation or less than one tenth the dosage of radiation that you would get from a chest X-ray.

## ***Which bones are scanned?***

DXA machines usually scan the lower spine and both hips. This helps us determine your individual risk of fracture and a possible diagnosis of osteoporosis. We may scan your spine with you lying on your side to check if you have a spinal fracture. Occasionally we scan the forearm or do a whole body assessment.

## ***What does a DXA scan involve?***

The DXA appointment will take up to 45 minutes.

It doesn't involve going into a "tunnel" or having an injection. We ask you to lie on a firm couch, while the arm of the scanner passes over you to take an image of your spine and hips.

## ***What should I wear?***

- ✓ **PLEASE WEAR loose comfortable clothing.**  
**We will ask you to remove underwired bras.**
- ✗ **DO NOT WEAR:**
  - ✗ **Jeans as they affect the quality of the scan.**  
**Normal trousers with a metal zip at the front are fine.**
  - ✗ **Clothes that have metal or metal decoration.**

## ***Do I need to bring anything else?***

**Please complete and bring the DXA questionnaire** that came with your appointment letter. This will help us undertake your DXA scan assessment.



## ***How can I change or cancel an appointment?***

**Please contact:**

**Email:     gram.osteoporosis@nhs.scot**

**:         01224 559970 or 559971**

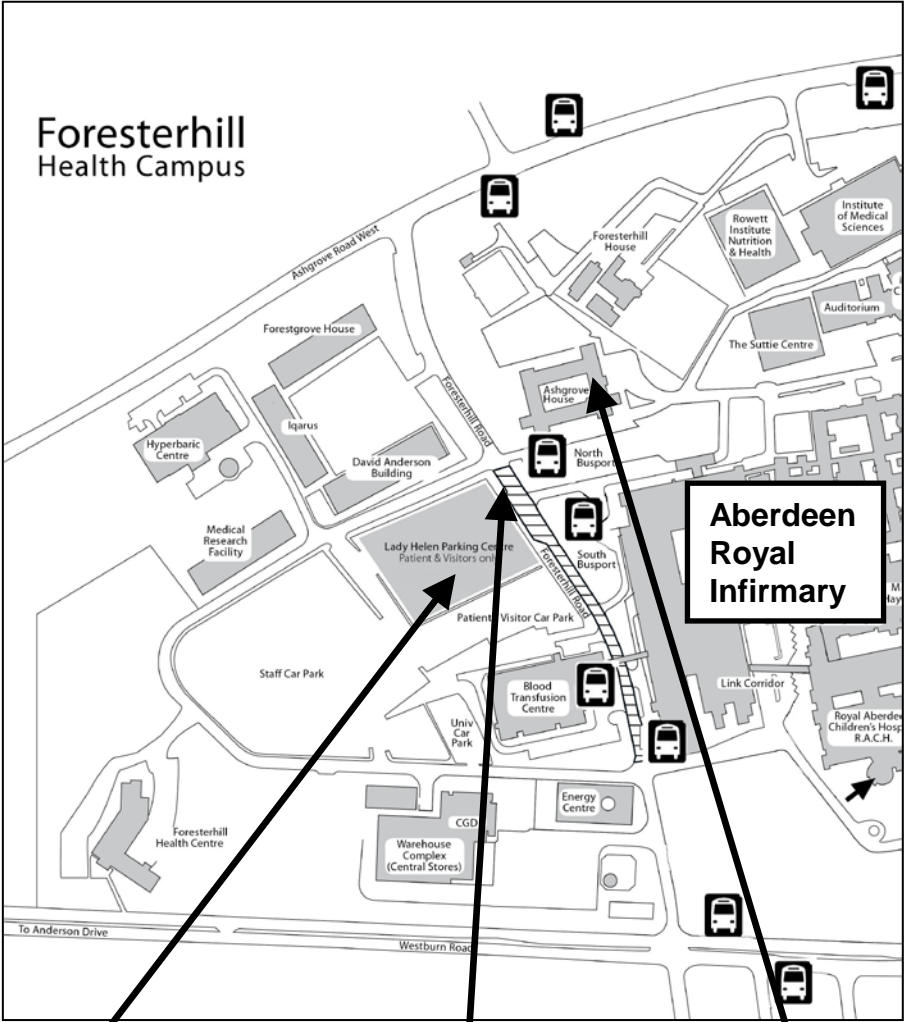
Please quote your name, date of birth or CHI number (this is on your invitation letter).

## ***Is there any car parking?***

The large multi-storey car park is opposite the main entrance to the Foresterhill site and is near our department. There is also some limited parking, including disabled spaces, directly outside Ashgrove House.

Show the barrier attendant your appointment letter to get into the site or the multi-storey (see map on page 8 of this leaflet or go to our website **[www.nhsgrampian.org](http://www.nhsgrampian.org)** and check the “Getting to ARI” page).

# Foresterhill Health Campus



**Aberdeen  
Royal  
Infirmary**

**Multi-storey  
car park**

**Main  
entrance  
to site**

**Grampian  
Osteoporosis  
Service, Ashgrove  
House**



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Ask for leaflet 1880.**

Feedback from the public helped us to develop this leaflet.  
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please call us on 01224 554149 to let us know.