

## Dual Energy X-ray Absorptiometry (DXA)

**What is it:** Test for bone density and body composition

### How to prepare:

- Be prepared to give a urine sample
- Arrive metal/ hard plastic free or ready to change. This includes:
  - No zippers
  - No buttons
  - No reflective materials
  - No jewelry or watches
  - No bras with clasps or underwire (Ladies, please wear/ bring a sports bra without metal/ hard plastic if possible)
  - No metal or hard plastic hair clips or pins
  - If you have metal in your body (such as a replaced joint or a pin in a bone) that is OK. Please inform us.
- Do not take a calcium or multivitamin supplements within 4 hours of your appointment
- If possible, avoid scheduling elective scans that involve contrast or swallowing barium within 2 weeks of your appointment.



### What can you expect:

- All females will be asked to provide a small urine sample to conduct a pregnancy test as a standard precaution. (Unless study staff requests otherwise.)
- The scans do subject you to small amounts of radiation. A whole body scans produces a level of radiation equivalent to flying by airplane from New York to California.
- You will be asked to put on a metal free outfit. A johnnie and hospital pants will be provided but avoiding wearing a lot of metal or jewelry can be beneficial.
- You will be asked a series of questions regarding your basic joint and bone history, and if you have any metal or plastic artifacts or implants in your body. Note: implants or artifacts may include pins or screws from medical procedures, pacemakers, imbedded insulin pumps or piercings you are unable to remove.
- If you do have metal or other implants in your body, you can still have a DXA scan without any pain or problems, the implants will just show up in the DXA scan.
- You will be asked to lie on the DXA table or sit in a chair next to table, depending on the scans being preformed.

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- You will be positioned by the technician according to the needs of each scan. Minor modifications can be made to improve your comfort. Given the length of scans most patients are able to hold the positions without major modifications.
- Each scan will take between 30 seconds to 3 minutes, depending on the scan. Most scans will need to be repeated a few times in order to get the bone in the desired location.
- Common complaints participants have during DXA scans include:
  - Having to remove jewelry/ metal.
  - Being uncomfortable in certain positions during the scans, such as having to lie flat on the table for whole body scans.
  - Having to be repositioned multiple times.

