

Falls Services

In your report you will find that we have assessed your risk of falls. If you were found to be prone to falls, it will be recommended that you be seen in a specialized clinic. Currently, there are 2 specialized clinics in Darent Valley Hospital:

1. Falls clinic and
2. Dizziness and Syncope Clinic.

Your GP is the best one to judge to which clinic you should be referred.

As you know fractures always happen secondary to falls, and we aim to diagnose those who are prone to falls as early as possible, hence we will be able to help and prevent fractures.

More than 30% of people aged over 65 in the community fall each year, many of them more than once. This figure increases to 50% (one in two) for those over 80 years. From our own audit data we know that over 100 patients attend Darent Valley Hospital Accident & Emergency each month with a fall. The hospitals audit database was however only able to identify 59 patients in 3 months, meaning that only 20% of the total number of fallers were correctly identified.

Please look carefully at your falls risk and if you have any query, please do not hesitate to discuss it with your doctor.

Local Bone Health Services

The local services have a unique role as it draws together the many disciplines involved in osteoporosis. They provide highly specialized service to every body who may require it. Services include:

1. Assessment of Osteoporosis fracture risk.
2. Assessment of falls risk.
3. Assessment of bone mineral density (DXA scanning).
4. Fracture liaison service.
5. Assessment of patients suffering from systemic diseases or taking medications that make them prone to osteoporosis.
6. The inpatients' Locomotor Unit serves the patients who require acute or urgent care.

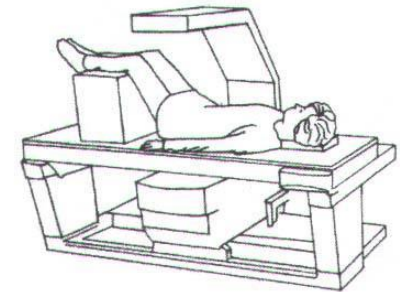
Please note that this brief summary is for general information and was not intended to review the issue. If you have any query or had any unusual symptom, please contact your doctor. It will help if you make a note of what you have experienced, when it started and how long it lasted.

Here to Help

Egyptian Academy of Bone Health

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What does my DXA result mean?

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What is Osteoporosis?

Although bone seems hard as a rock, cells in bone are constantly being broken down (resorbed) while others are being made. Osteoporosis is a disorder in which bones lose their density. Their internal micro-architecture deteriorates. Bones become fragile and are at greater risk of breaking (fracture). Bone breakage in the back often leads to a hump, sometimes called a dowager's hump, at the top of the back. Medically, it's called a Thoracic Kyphosis.

Low bone mass is the most accurate predictor of increased fracture risk. It is estimated that one of every two Caucasian women will have an osteoporotic fracture at some point in her life. The risk for men is lower but increases with age in both sexes. All ethnicities are affected. World Health Organization (WHO) criteria estimate that 35% of women over age 65 have osteoporosis. The lifetime risk of hip fracture in white women is similar to the combined risk of breast, endometrial and ovarian cancer.

Bone mineral density testing is indicated for anyone at risk for osteoporosis. Axial DXA is considered the gold standard for measuring bone mineral density. It is used for both diagnosis and to monitor the effects of treatment. Lumbar spine and hip measurements are most commonly obtained. In order to follow density results over time, it is best to use the same machine. So try to go back to the same place where you had your prior test and ask to be placed on the same machine. In most cases, the time suggested for your next DXA scan will be written in the report.

What does DXA scanner do?

The most commonly used technique to assess bone density is dual energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA). The amount of mineralized tissue within a section of spine or hip is measured and expressed as grams per cm². Values are compared to sex- and aged-matched controls (Z-Score); or to healthy, same sex individuals aged 30 years who are felt to have attained peak bone mass (T-Score).

So what does my DXA score mean?

Have a look at your report; there are two results to check: T-score and Z-score. T-score is a comparison of your score against the average reading for a 30 years old healthy subjects, while Z-score is a comparison to subjects of similar age to you and of the same gender.

The World Health Organization (WHO) uses a T-score of -2.5 to define osteoporosis. A T-score between -1 and -2.5 indicates some bone mineral loss (osteopenia) and a risk of osteoporosis. T-score above -1 is considered normal. Every standard deviation below normal doubles the risk of fracture.

The Z-score is used to classify the type of osteoporosis. A score between 0 and -1.5 suggests primary osteoporosis, which is age related. A score of -1.5 and lower e.g. -1.9 suggests secondary osteoporosis possibly associated with other underlying medical conditions. You should be seen by the specialist in such cases.

I have osteopenia, What Shall I do now?

Do not worry, the risk can be reversed. You can still take measures to help prevent the continued loss of bone mass. Your report will tell you briefly about such measures. You should consult your doctor as to whether medication is required and consider making dietary and lifestyle changes that include:

1. Increase your intake of calcium and vitamin D.
2. Take up weight bearing exercises e.g. walking, jogging, running, skipping and aerobics for 20-30 min. three times a week.
3. Avoid excessive alcohol intake and smoking.

I have Osteoporosis, What shall I do?

Apart from the preventive measures, there are other treatments available if you have osteoporosis. These may slow down the loss of bone or reduce the risk of fractures. If your DXA result revealed osteoporosis at either the hip or the spine or both, then you should start osteoporosis therapy once possible. You will find in your report a suggestion regarding the most appropriate therapy for you. You will be offered an appointment in the nurse led osteoporosis clinic in Darent Valley Hospital or Gravesend Hospital to discuss this with you and to answer your other queries. Should you have any further query later on, please do not hesitate to contact us or your doctor.