

# Having a DEXA Scan

## Information for patients

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### What is a DEXA Scan?

A DEXA scan is a type of X-ray that gives images of your bones. DEXA scans measure your bone density, which tells us about the strength of your bones. You are having a DEXA scan so that your doctor or healthcare practitioner can either make a diagnosis or monitor the progress of your treatment. Each DEXA scan gives a very small dose of radiation, equivalent to about 2 days of natural background radiation and carries a very low risk.

Our overriding concern is to ensure that when you have an X-ray, the benefits from making the right diagnosis or providing the correct treatment outweigh the very low risk involved with the X-ray itself. We make sure that this is the case before you have your DEXA scan.

**If there is a possibility that you may be pregnant, please phone the department before your appointment date to discuss this further.**

### What will happen at my appointment?

The technician will first measure your height and weight. You will then be asked to lie flat on the scanner for about 10 minutes. We normally scan your spine and hip, but may also scan your forearm or whole body. Each scan takes a few minutes, and you will be asked to remain still.

### Why have I been sent for a scan?

Your GP or a doctor in the hospital may have referred you and they will explain why. If this has not happened, then you will have been referred via the "Fracture Liaison Service" (FLS). This is an automatic referral service for those aged 50 and over who have had a recent low trauma fracture diagnosed at an NHS Lothian accident and emergency department.

### What do I need to do before my appointment?

There is no special preparation needed for this scan. You can eat and drink as normal before your appointment.

**However, if you have had either a barium scan/study, an MRI or CT scan within 4 weeks before your appointment, please phone us to discuss.** This is because the X-ray contrast "dye" used in these studies can cause unreliable DEXA scan results.

Please do not wear clothes which contain anything with metal, as this will interfere with the images (this includes bras with metal underwiring or metal clasps at the back of the bra). Body jewellery at the navel will also have to be removed. We can provide you with a gown to change into during your appointment.

**If you have any additional mobility requirements, please phone the department in advance of your appointment day, so that appropriate preparations can be made.**

If you require Patient Transport, your DEXA scan appointment must be booked for 2pm or earlier. If your allocated time is after 2pm, please call us to arrange a more suitable time in line with patient transport requirements.

You will have also been sent a questionnaire with your appointment letter. Please complete this and bring it with you when you come for your scan. This information will be used to provide your doctor with advice about what type of treatment we think will be helpful to strengthen your bones if necessary. If you did not receive a questionnaire, please arrive early to your appointment and we will give you one to complete in the department.

### What should I do when I arrive at the Western General hospital?

Go to the **Outpatient Building** and you will find the DEXA scanning department within the **Medical Physics Department** on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. Please report to the Medical Physics Reception and give them your name or show them your appointment letter. Someone will call your name when they are ready to see you.

If arriving by car, access the hospital grounds via the Porterfield Road entrance and use the multi-storey carpark nearest the Outpatient Building. There are disabled spaces available.

### When will I get the results of my scan?

The results of your scan will be sent to the GP or clinician who referred you, and they will discuss them with you either at a future clinic visit or a GP appointment. You will be advised at your appointment about how long the results will take.

### What should I do if I cannot keep my appointment?

If you cannot keep your appointment, or have been given one that is unsuitable, please change it by phoning us on **0131 537 3727**.

This will allow us to offer the appointment to another patient and help us to reduce the waiting times for these scans. Please note that if you do not attend your appointment, we will not offer you another one, we will advise your referring clinician and remove you from the waiting list.

### Travelling to the Western General Hospital, Crewe Road, Edinburgh EH4 2XU

**Driving** - all parking available to patients is free. Please note that the car park can be extremely busy so please allow sufficient time for travel and parking to ensure you arrive on time for your appointment. If you are late, we cannot guarantee you will still be seen and another appointment for a different date may have to be arranged.

**Public Transport** - Lothian Buses on 0131 555 6363 or [www.lothianbuses.co.uk](http://www.lothianbuses.co.uk)

Traveline Scotland on 08712 002 233 or [www.travelinescotland.com](http://www.travelinescotland.com)

**Patient Transport** - will only be made available if you have medical or clinical needs.

Telephone **0300 123 1236** (calls charged at local rate) up to 28 days in advance to book, making sure you have your CHI Number and appointment information available.

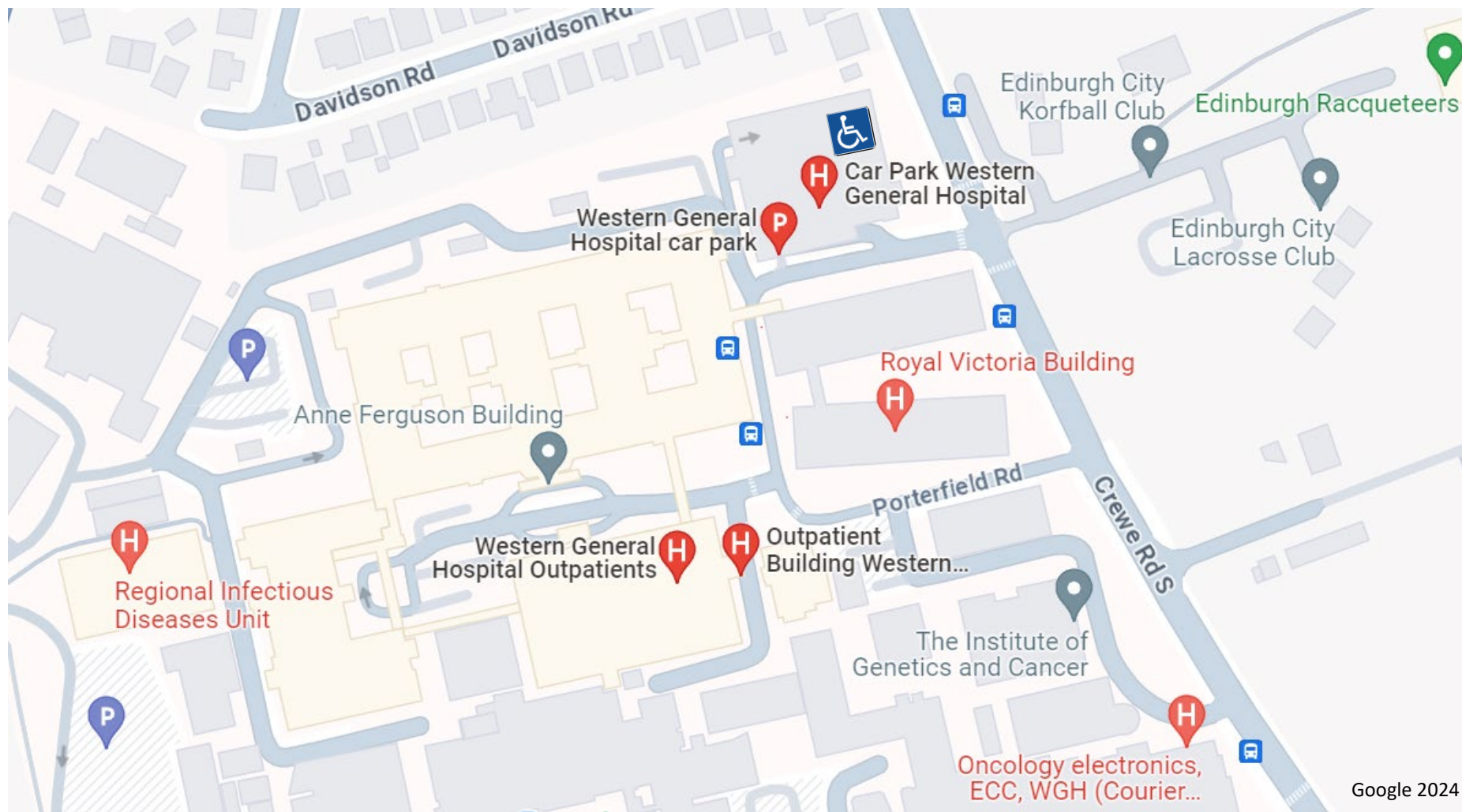
A text relay service is available if you are hard of hearing or speech impaired. They can be contacted on **18001 – 0300 123 1236** (calls are charged at local rate).

To cancel patient transport, you should telephone **0300 123 1236**.

### Contact Us

To rearrange your appointment or for mobility requirements, phone **0131 537 3727**.

**Please remember to bring your appointment letter and the completed patient questionnaire with you. Thank you.**



**Directions are available on Google Maps or you can scan the QR codes below using the camera on your phone:**

Directions to outpatient building entrance



Directions to accessible car park

