



Rehearsal Guide

DEXA Bone Scan

Preparing people with intellectual disability/autism (ID/A) to successfully complete a DEXA bone scan.

Introduction for Caregivers

A rehearsal guide contains realistic pictures, concrete ideas, and clear, brief instructions for guiding a person through what can be expected in a specific situation. It includes helpful suggestions for caregivers to follow to make the experience meaningful for the person and increase the likelihood of a successful outcome. This approach is beneficial when supporting people with intellectual disability/autism (ID/A) who are anxious about situations such as doctors' appointments, hospitalizations, and medical testing.

A rehearsal guide provides opportunities for the caregiver to assist the person to learn about a specific situation. It contains information on what is needed and why and explains exactly what can be expected. Such a guide is most effective when it is person-centered and used in conjunction with discussion to allow exploration of specific areas of concern. It can be a powerful tool when used as intended.

The expected result is that the person will then experience the situation in a way that supports health and well-being by being prepared and knowing what to expect. The guide can be used at all stages of the situation to facilitate a positive end result.

Thank you for taking the time to use this tool to work with self-advocates to improve their health outcomes.

How to Use This Rehearsal Guide

For best results, begin to review this rehearsal guide with the person prior to the day of the appointment. Sometimes it will help to review this material with an individual several days or weeks before an appointment; other times, it may be better to wait to review this material until just before the procedure is to take place, perhaps the day before or the morning of the procedure. Together with the individual, determine which will best suit the individual's needs and abilities in understanding the information provided; however, it is important not to wait until 5 minutes before a procedure to introduce this guide to an individual. Give the individual enough time in advance to become familiar with the procedure based on the pictures and information contained on each page and with the individual's abilities in mind.

It is best to review this guide slowly and to focus on one idea/page at a time, allowing the person to talk and/or ask questions after each idea/page is presented. A caregiver may want to share personal experiences related to having this procedure done but be sure to do so in a positive manner, depicting a positive outcome.

For Best Practices

- ✓ Allot time to review this material when the individual is alert and interested in doing so.
- ✓ Ensure that the setting is free from distraction. Based on the individual's attention span, it may be best to review one page at a time, rather than reviewing an entire guide in one sitting.
- ✓ Explain each picture and practice the suggested exercises with the individual, such as deep breathing, as they appear throughout the guide.
- ✓ On the day of the procedure, take this guide along to continue rehearsing the various steps involved in the procedure.
- ✓ Remain positive, calm, and upbeat.
- ✓ Remember to offer positive reinforcement throughout the procedure. If the procedure is not able to be completed, focus on positive aspects. If the individual seems upset, talk about it later when they are calm to find out how they felt and what could be changed or improved to have a better outcome the next time.

Introducing the Process



(Name of individual), you are going to have a special

test called a DEXA Scan that will take pictures of the bones inside of your body on (Insert date here).

The doctor ordered this test to see how strong and healthy your bones are.

(Name of caregiver) will go with you and stay with you while the people who work there get you ready for the test.

The test will take place at (name of location).

Preparing for the DEXA Scan

A DEXA scan is an x-ray that takes pictures of your bones.

Just like other x-rays, there is very little to do to get ready for this.



Preparing for the DEXA Scan

There are only three things to do the day of the exam.

1. The doctor may ask you to stop taking medications that make bones thicker and healthier. These medications are called calcium pills.



Note to Caregiver: *The individual's physician may order that calcium pills be stopped on the day of the test. Follow physician instructions for administering or omitting medications.*

Preparing for the DEXA Scan

2. You can wear your own clothes during this test.

Choose loose clothing with no metal zippers or metal buttons. Be comfortable!



Preparing for the DEXA Scan

3. Do not wear any jewelry because you will need to take them off for the test.

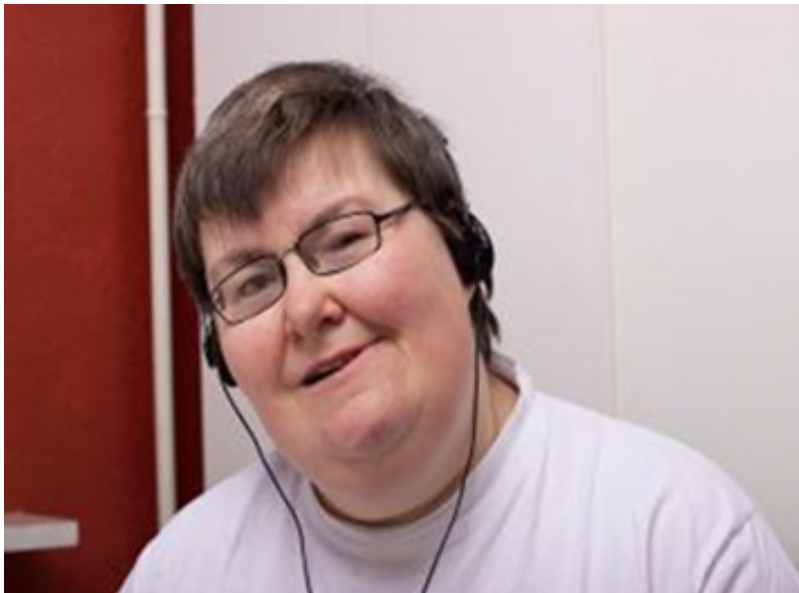


In the Waiting Room

When you first get to your appointment, you will have to wait until someone calls your name to have the pictures of your body taken.

(Name of caregiver) will stay in the waiting room with you.

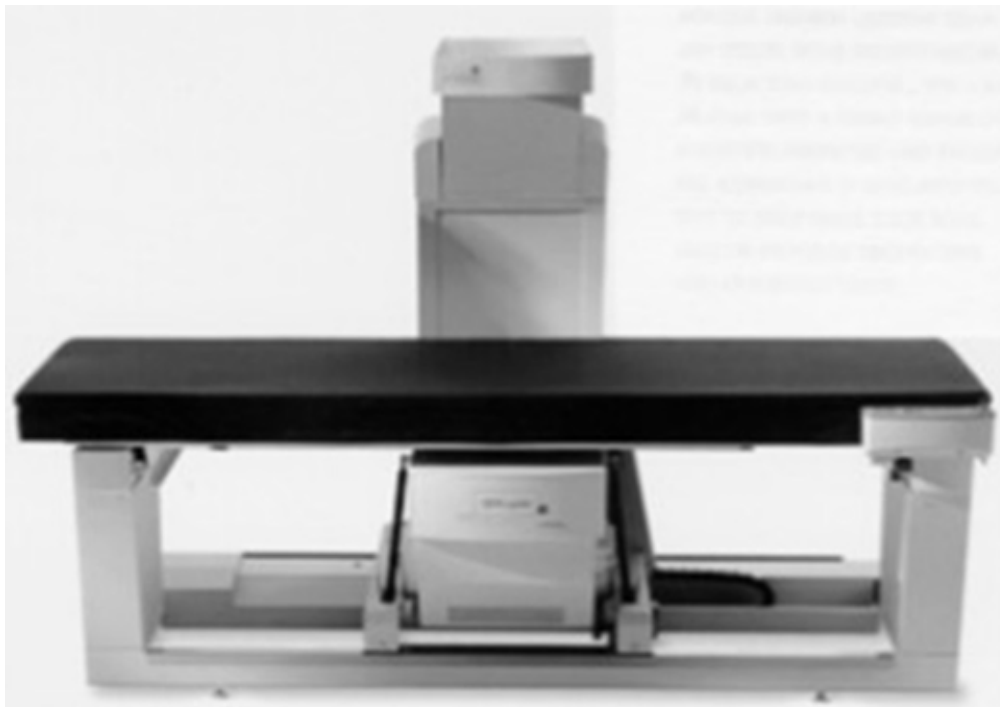
Would you like to take a favorite book along to read or some of your favorite music to listen to on your headset while you wait?



The DEXA Scan

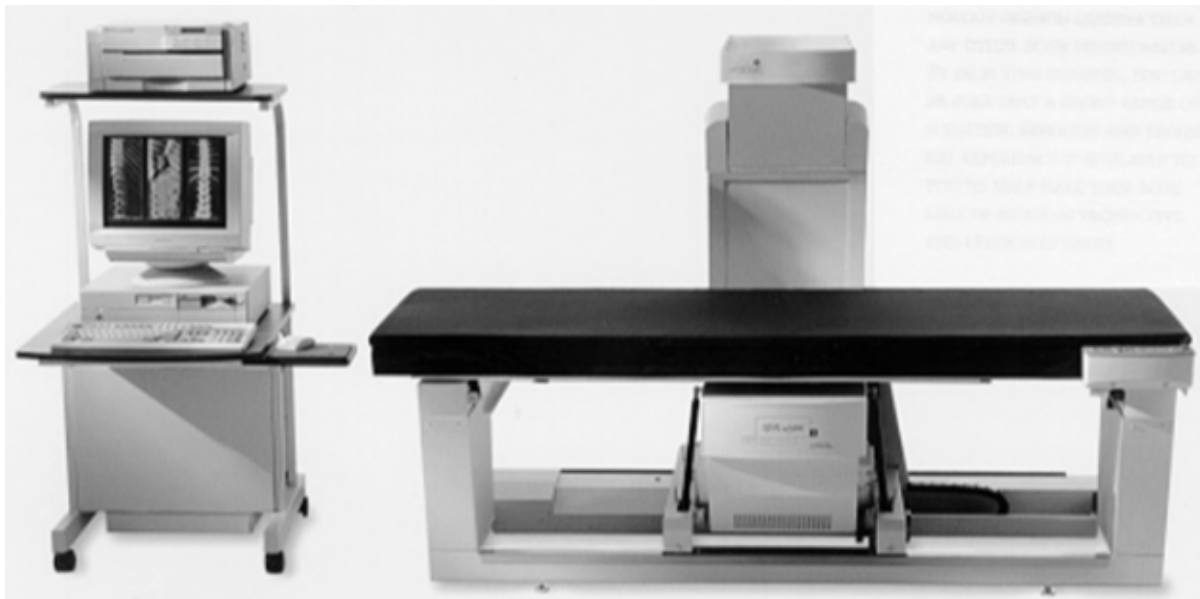
The medical person who will be taking the pictures will help you lie down on the table so the pictures can be taken.

This is what the table looks like. It is padded so it is not hard and doesn't hurt to lay on it.



The DEXA Scan Machine

This is a picture of the DEXA scan machine and the computer. The medical person will use these to take the pictures of your bones.



Note to Caregiver: Contact the testing facility for permission to stay with the person during the test for reassurance and to help position the person. If permitted, read next statement:

If you would like (Name of caregiver) will stay with you during the test.

Taking the Pictures

The medical person taking the picture might put your legs on a box to get better pictures. This is what it looks like.

See the **arrow**? The medical person makes this part of the machine move back and forth over your body to take the pictures. This doesn't hurt at all. All you have to do is lay on the table.



Breathing Exercise

You must lie very still for the test.

Sometimes you may need to hold your breath to get the best picture. The medical person may ask you to hold your breath for just a short time during the DEXA Scan.

Let's practice holding our breath.



Note to Caregiver: Practice holding your breath with the person. Encourage the individual to hold their breath with you.

You Can Do It!

The DEXA scan only takes about 15 minutes to do, and then you are done!

See? It's that simple!

I know you can do it! You always do a great job!



Additional Resources

- Mayo Clinic. Bone density test. (2021, September 25). Retrieved on August 03, 2022, from <https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/bone-density-test/about/pac-20385273>
- Radiological Society of North America (RSNA), and American College of Radiology. (2022, April 15). Bone Densitometry (DEXA, DXA). Retrieved on August 03, 2022, from <https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info.cfm?pg=dexa>

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For additional information regarding this guide or any of our physical or behavioral health trainings, contact:

**Kepro SW PA Health Care Quality Unit
(Kepro HCQU)**