

## Bone health guidance to Primary Care in light of covid-19 DXA delays

The DXA service has reopened for patient referrals. Referrers must take account of the patient's overall health and the risk Covid-19 poses before deciding whether a referral is appropriate.

We are operating at a much reduced capacity and request that you prioritise those patients where the DXA will be most valuable. The following advice may help with treatment decisions.

Please evaluate patients by FRAX (<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/FRAX/>) and utilise the associated NOGG guidance before considering referral.

- If they fall in to the high-risk bracket (**red zone**), we would recommend treatment with a bisphosphonate and calcium/vitamin D supplementation of your choice (assuming there are no contraindications).
- If they fall in to the low risk bracket (**green zone**), pharmacological treatment is not necessary.
- For those patients that fall in to the **amber zone**, a DXA request should be considered. However, if this is not felt to be appropriate at this time, the following guidance may help:
  - For patients with a perceived lower risk (younger, fitter, low risk of falls, no previous fractures etc.) it is reasonable to avoid treatment at present. A DXA scan can be considered at a later stage to help inform if treatment might be necessary.
  - For patients with a perceived higher risk (older, frailty, multiple risk factors, high risk of falls, previous typical fragility fracture etc.) it may be reasonable to commence treatment. A DXA scan can be considered at a later date to help inform if treatment should be on-going.

For repeat DXA requests where your patient is not already on bone protective treatment:

- Please refer to guidance in the bullet points above.

For repeat DXA requests where your patient is already on bone protective treatment:

- Please refer for DXA as normal. Please note that we may not be able to scan patients in the usual (within 6 weeks) timeframe. Treatment should be continued whilst the patient awaits their DXA scan.

For all patients, appropriate lifestyle risk factors should be addressed (avoiding smoking and avoiding excess alcohol intake, safe sunlight exposure, adequate dietary calcium intake, frequent weight-bearing exercise).

We are sorry that DXA capacity is reduced at present. We thank you for your understanding in these challenging times.

Yours sincerely,



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