



Newson Health®

## What is a body composition scan?

Body composition is a term used by healthcare professionals. It refers to the percentage of fat, bone, and muscle in your body. Body composition scans are used to determine whether your level of visceral (internal) fat is at a healthy level. It also measures your lean (muscle) mass and bone mass.

### Why is body composition important?

Body composition is important because it can give you an indication of your own individual health and potential risks. In simple terms, a healthy body composition is one that is made up of less fat and more muscle. Someone else could be the same height and weight as you, but they might have more body fat and less muscle and would therefore have greater individual risks than if you just judged it by weight or body mass index (BMI) alone. Too much body fat leads to increased risks of diseases like cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and other health problems.

### How is body composition measured?

Body fat and muscle mass are best measured with a DEXA body scan (dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry). A DEXA scan uses a very low dose of radiation to measure mass of fat, muscle and bone in a very precise way.

It works by sending a low x-ray beam that accounts for two compositions within your body, one calculates soft tissue and the other calculates bone. It can therefore provide you with an in-depth analysis of your body's fat, muscle and bone.

### Why might you want a body composition scan?

There are several reasons why you might want to know more about your own body composition. You might have a keen interest in your physical health and want to know more about reducing possible future health risks. Studies have shown that people with higher amounts of visceral fat are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes, heart disease, colon cancer and stroke, for example.

If you are just beginning a diet or fitness programme, having a scan before and during your programme will allow you to be able to precisely monitor changes in your body's fat and muscle mass in your arms, legs and trunk.

If you are an athlete or play sports to a high level, you may want a detailed analysis of your body composition to help you plan and improve your nutrition and training regimes.

### DEXA body composition scans at Newson Health

Having a DEXA body composition scan is quick, comfortable and very safe. The dose of X-ray radiation is less than one day's normal background radiation and far lower than the radiation from normal X-rays or CT scans. It does not involve going in a tunnel-like machine and you will remain fully dressed throughout.

You can have this test on its own or combine it with a DEXA scan that measures your bone density (bone strength).

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