

Reading your DEXA report

A short guide to the labels. Keep your original report with this sheet.

Fat mass and percentage

Fat mass is a weight. Percentage is its share of total scanned mass. Read both; a percentage can shift when lean tissue changes too.

Lean tissue

Includes water and organs as well as muscle. A change is not automatically the same amount of muscle gained or lost.

Appendicular lean mass index

Arm and leg lean tissue divided by height squared. Ask which reference is used; the value alone does not assess strength.

Visceral fat

Check the units and the scanner-specific explanation. Discuss an unexpected result with your GP.

Bone density, T-scores and Z-scores

Check whether you had a diagnostic bone density scan or a body composition scan. Discuss the report with your GP; a whole-body score is not a diagnostic hip or spine score.

Comparing scans

Check the equipment, preparation and regional labels. Ask the clinic whether a change exceeds its measurement variation.

Sources and the full guide

ISCD reporting positions: <https://iscd.org/official-positions-2023/>

NHANES body composition reference study: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC2737140/>

Read the full guide: <https://dexascans.com.au/results>