



Bone Scan

PATIENT INFORMATION

What is a Bone Scan?

A nuclear medicine bone scan is an imaging test that uses a small amount of radioactive tracer to detect bone abnormalities such as fractures, infections, arthritis, or cancer spread. The tracer is injected into a vein and accumulates in areas of increased bone activity, which are then captured using a special gamma camera.

What will happen during the examination?

A bone scan is a two-part test. In the first part, you will receive a small injection into a vein (usually in the arm). This injection will not interfere with any medications you may be taking. Some patients will require immediate images following the injection; others will not. This first part will take between 5 and 20 minutes (depending on how many pictures are needed).

The second part of the study will be performed anywhere from 2 to 6 hours after your initial injection. The exact time will be confirmed with you on the day. When you return for the second part special pictures of your skeleton will be taken. Please allow at least an hour for all the images to be taken. Bone scans of the hands, feet, knees, or shoulders take approximately half an hour. Bone scans of the spine or whole body take around one hour.

Between the first and second part of the scan, you can leave the department. There are no ill effects from the injection and there are no restrictions placed on you, it is recommended that you do not have contact with children during this time. Patients who are the primary caregiver to young children on the day of the test, are encouraged to maintain a certain distance (around 1 metre) from the children for 1 hour following injections, to avoid unnecessary radiation exposure to them.

Pregnant and/or breastfeeding

This examination is not suitable for pregnant women.

Breastfeeding mothers should contact our department before their appointment to discuss any specific preparation. You will need to express and discard milk but can resume feeding after your appointment.

After the examination

Our radiologist will review and report on your images and we will deliver them electronically to your doctor.



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