

PATIENT INFORMATION: Bone Scan

A bone scan is a test that looks at the metabolic activity of the bone. An X-ray tells shows how the bones appear, a bone scan tells us how a bone is functioning.

How does a bone scan work?

When having a bone scan, you are injected in the arm with a small quantity of phosphate that has radiotracer attached to it. A radiotracer is a substance that emits a small amount of energy similar to an X-ray which can be detected with a gamma camera. The camera takes an image of the radiotracer as it is absorbed by normal bone and is accumulated around bones suffering from fractures, arthritis, certain tumours and infection.

Is this test safe?

Yes. You will receive a small amount of radiation from the radiotracer and this is well within safety limits.

What happens when I have a bone scan?

Part 1: When you arrive in the department you will be injected in the arm with a small amount of radiotracer. An initial image or scan may be taken. This takes 15 minutes.

Part 2: This radiotracer circulates throughout the body and is gradually absorbed into the bones. This process may take between 2-3 hour. You will be asked to return for a scan 2 hours after the initial injection. Our specialist will review these images and may order additional. The actually scanning process takes about 60 minutes to complete

How long will this test take?

Depending on the equipment of your particular scan allow 3-4 hours from when you arrive.

What are the preparations that I need to take?

There are NO preparations. You may eat and drink and take your usual medications. After you have been injected you will be asked to keep yourself well hydrated until you return for Part 2.

What should I do following the test?

We ask that you:

1. Keep yourself well hydrated for the next 24 hours. A substantial amount of the Tc99m injection will pass out through your urine.
2. Keep your distance from pregnant woman or children.
3. If you are seeing your doctor or any other health professional immediately after your scan please notify them that you are still a source of radiation.
4. We ask that you do not schedule any other appointments for yourself for the rest of the day.

If you are breast feeding, pregnant or think that you might be pregnant, please tell the staff BEFORE the injection.

