

NUCLEAR MEDICINE DEPARTMENT CHURCHILL HOSPITAL

YOUR ISOTOPE BONE SCAN EXPLAINED

What is a bone scan?

A bone scan is a method of looking at your bones to show conditions not seen using x-rays. It requires an injection of a small amount of radioactive fluid, which is then taken up by the bones. This scan is performed 3 hours after the injection.

Do I need to prepare for the scan?

No special preparation is required. You may eat and drink as normal before and after the scan, but you will be asked to drink 1.5 litres of fluid between the injection and the scan. The fluid is of your own choice so you may wish to bring something with you. There is no need to stop taking any tablets that you may have been prescribed.

Are there any side effects?

There are no ill effects from the injection. It will not affect your ability to drive afterwards.

Is the radiation dangerous?

The dose received from the injection is similar to 2 years background radiation however you should avoid prolonged contact with small children and pregnant women for 24 hours following the injection.

Is there anything I should tell the Radiographer before the scan?

Yes. **Ladies** please tell us before the injection if there is any possibility of you being pregnant, or if you are breastfeeding. **Gentlemen** – if you have prostatic problems please inform the radiographer and drinking recommendations will be modified.

If you are unable to attend.

If you are unable to attend please inform the department by telephoning **01865 225957** so that we offer your appointment to another patient. We will arrange another appointment for you as soon as possible.

The waiting area for patients is unsuitable for children. If possible please do not bring children with you.

DURING THE EXAMINATION

What does the procedure involve?

You will be given an injection into a vein in your arm. There is a 3-hour wait following this, to allow for the substance to be absorbed into the bones. You are free to leave the hospital during this time if you wish.

Please drink approximately 1.5 litres of fluid between the injection and your scan, and empty your bladder often. If your fluid intake is restricted please inform the Radiographer.

Your scan will be performed with you sitting, standing or lying down.

The camera will be brought close to various parts of your body and images taken. This will take approximately 45 minutes.

You are not required to undress, but we suggest you wear comfortable, loose fitting clothing.

You will be asked to remove metal objects such as coins, rings, pendants and belts.

AFTER THE EXAMINATION

What happens after the scan?

Once the scan is finished, the films will be checked and occasionally x-rays taken to interpret the bone scan.

The bone scan injection is radioactive. The amount of radioactivity is very small however you are advised to avoid close contact with expectant mothers and small children for 24 hours following the injection (close contact means having a child sitting next to you or on your knee for more than 30 minutes). This avoids exposing them to unnecessary radiation.

What is the next step?

The results will not be available immediately after the examination. If your doctor sent you for this examination, you should go back to the surgery for the result not less than 2 weeks after the examination. If a doctor from the hospital sent you, you may already have been advised by the clinic of your appointment to obtain the results of this examination.

Patients referred from the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre

All films are returned to the Radiology Department at the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre for reporting. Please allow 2 weeks for the results to be sent to your doctor.