

## Information about you and additional information

As part of your care, information will be shared between clinical staff, some of whom you may not meet. It may also be used to help train other staff. Information collected may also be used later on to help the department improve their quality of care, plan services or to research into new developments.

The pictures from your scan may be used to teach other.

## Additional information

All the staff would like to make your visit as pleasant as possible. If you have any concerns, please talk to a member of the nuclear medicine staff.

Whiston Hospital  
Warrington Road,  
Prescot, Merseyside, L35 5DR  
Telephone: 0151 426 1600

St Helens Hospital  
Marshall Cross Road,  
St Helens, Merseyside, WA9 3DA  
Telephone: 01744 26633

# Having a Bone Scan

This leaflet can be made available  
in alternative languages / formats on request.

如有需要，本传单可提供其他语言/版式  
此單張的其他語言/格式版本可按要求提供

Na żądanie ta ulotka może zostać udostępniona  
w innych językach/formatach.

## Introduction

### What is a bone scan?

A bone scan (or Isotope Bone Scan) is a nuclear medicine test that looks at the activity of some cells in your bones. A small amount of a radioactive material which collects in bone shows areas where bones are breaking down and being repaired. This breakdown and repair is a normal way of keeping your bones healthy, but in some diseases these processes go wrong and this can be seen clearly on a bone scan. The bone scan can be used to look for many different things, such as injury, infection, cancer and other causes of bone damage.

### Risks

For this scan it is necessary to inject a small amount of radioactive tracer, called a radiopharmaceutical, in order to take the pictures. The small risk from this is outweighed by the information that will be gained by taking the scan. A doctor will have checked the request to make sure this is the appropriate test for you. If you have any concerns or would like further information, please contact the department where you are having your bone scan. If you do not understand why you need to have this scan, please speak to the doctor who referred you. or visit:

<https://www.ukhsa-protectionservices.org.uk/radiationandyou/>

### Pregnancy

If you know that you are pregnant, or there is any chance that you may be pregnant, then please contact the department where you will be having your bone scan. Do this as soon as possible as the scan can be postponed if it is not urgent.

Also contact the department if you are breast-feeding, as they may give you special instructions.

## After your scan continued

### Travelling abroad

It is perfectly safe for you to travel abroad after your scan, but many airports and sea ports are now equipped with very sensitive radiation detectors. So it is possible that the very small amount of radioactivity left in your body could set off a detector as you pass through security. Therefore, if you intend to travel abroad within a week following your scan, it could be helpful to take with you something to explain that you have recently had a nuclear medicine scan. This could be your appointment letter or some other official confirmation from the department where you had your scan.



### Your results

Your bone scan will be looked at by a specialist doctor, who will issue a report. The report will be sent to the doctor who requested your scan rather than to your GP. This is because the doctor who requested your scan will have all the results from other tests and will be able to tell you how the result of your bone scan affects your care.

It will not be possible to identify you from the scan pictures.

All information will be treated as confidential and is not given to anyone who does not need it. If you have any concerns, please discuss these with the department.

## Your scan continued

In order to get extra information we sometimes need additional pictures. These will either be performed using a combination of images from the injection and a CT scan, or you being sent for some regular x-rays. This will generally happen after your initial scan and may add a further 10- 15 minutes to the time you are with us. Very occasionally you may be contracted to come back for x-rays on another day when the doctor has looked at the scan.

## After your scan

It is very unlikely that you will feel any side-effects after the scan, but if you think that you have please let the Nuclear Medicine Department know.

You may continue all your normal activities unless you have been advised otherwise.

After your scan there will be some radioactivity left in your body but this will not present a significant risk to other people around you.

However, for the rest of the day, **we suggest that you try to keep any time that you spend within arm's length of pregnant women, babies and small children as short as possible; but there is no need to stop giving children essential love and care.**

The radioactivity in your body will soon disappear, but if you continue to drink plenty of liquids this will help clear the radioactivity more quickly.

## Preparation for your test

### On the day

There are no special preparations for a bone scan. You can eat, drink and take any medicines as normal.

### Who will I see on the day of my test:



Radiographer



Nuclear medicine  
Practitioner



Student  
Radiographer

Your test will be performed by a Nuclear Medicine Radiographer assisted by an Nuclear Medicine Practitioner or Student Radiographer.

## Your injection

A small amount of radioactive tracer will be injected into a vein in your arm or hand. You may have had a blood test in the past. This is much the same. The 'pinprick' of the needle may hurt a bit, but that is all.

After the injection you will be asked to wait for about 2 to 3 hours before the pictures can be taken.



You will be asked to drink plenty of non-alcoholic liquids and go to the toilet as often as you need. This helps to get good pictures of your bones. Please let the staff know if you are on fluid restriction for any reason. You may eat normally.

## Your scan

Before the scan you will be asked to go to the toilet to empty your bladder. You will not have to get undressed, but you will be asked to remove any metal objects like braces, jewellery and belts before you lie on the bed of the scanner.



The scans are taken by a special machine called a gamma camera. This is not a tunnel, but the camera detector will come close to you. There are sensors in the camera which stop it moving if it touches anything, so it cannot hurt you.

The scans may look at all of your body, or only the bones that your doctor is interested in – like your legs or arms. You will not be left on your own – there will always be someone immediately available.

You will be asked to lie flat on your back on a special couch. The scans usually take about 30 minutes and it is very important that you keep still during this time.

If you think that you will find this difficult, please speak to the Nuclear Medicine Department before your appointment.