

What is a Nuclear Medicine Bone Scan?

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This scan uses an injection containing a small quantity of a radioactive tracer, which absorbs into the bones. If there is anything affecting the bone growth, or there is a repair process happening, more of the injection will be absorbed, which will show up on the scan.

Is it safe for me to have the scan?

The amount of radioactivity used to take the pictures is very small and the radioactivity is short-lived. Before we contact you, a Radiologist (X-ray consultant) will have checked the referring doctor's request to make sure this is a useful test for you. Any risk is outweighed by the benefit from the information gained from performing the scan. If you have any concerns or would like further information please do not hesitate to contact us.

Preparation for the scan.

You can eat or drink as normal before coming for this scan. However, if you have been told to starve for another scan, please follow those instructions.

Please wear loose fitting comfortable clothing without any large metal buttons, rivets or clips.

If you are pregnant, think you may be pregnant or if you are breast feeding, please call the department.

Valuables

Patients are encouraged to leave jewellery and valuables at home. It is the patient's responsibility to ensure all valuables are on their person before leaving the Nuclear Medicine Department.

The injection

When you arrive for the appointment, the radioactive tracer will be injected into a vein in your arm or hand via an intravenous cannula (drip needle). This does not hurt any more than the 'pinprick' of a blood test and should only take a few minutes to give. There is very little chance of a reaction to this injection. We then have to wait for this tracer to get into your bones, so you will be asked to return to the department about **2 hours** after the injection. We will confirm the actual time to return once the injection has been given. During this time, you may eat and can leave the hospital if you wish. We do encourage you to drink more than normal and keep going to the toilet, to flush out any of the tracer which does not absorb into the bones.

The scan

You do not have to get undressed for the scan, but will be asked to remove any metal objects such as belts, phones, glasses, keys and coins. You will be asked to lie flat on your back on a couch. Your legs can be raised slightly and your head will be on a pillow. The scan is taken by a special machine called a gamma camera.



Here is a picture of how it will be set up to start.

This is not a tunnel but it will come close to your head and face to start with. The scan starts over the head and works down the full length of the body. There are sensors

in the camera which stop it moving if it touches anything, so it cannot hurt you. We often then take further images, either with the camera rotating or in other positions around the body to get as much information as possible. For some scans, this is followed by a low dose Xray CT scan on the same machine, to get as much information as possible.

There will always be staff members close by during the scan so we will be able to help if there are any problems. The scan usually takes 30-45 minutes and it is very important that you lie still.

Please tell the department before the scan if you think this will be difficult or if you suffer with claustrophobia.

After the scan

You can eat and drink normally. Please avoid spending longer than 10 minutes per hour in close contact with children or anyone who is pregnant, for **18 hours** after the injection time; and reduce close contact with other adults for **9 hours**. This is to reduce their radiation exposure as much as possible.

Please note: *If a family member or friend usually helps you (the patient) with any personal care, please be aware that they may receive a small exposure to radiation in the 24 hours after your scan. This radiation exposure is usually no greater than the natural background radiation that would be received in a few weeks. The person who helps you will need to be informed of this exposure and agree to help you around the time of your examination. If you have any concerns, please call nuclear medicine on 01392 402124 to discuss this with our staff*

Changing your appointment

The injection material is made specifically for your appointment. If you are unable to keep this appointment, please let us know as soon as possible on 01392 402124. We may then be able to offer this appointment to another patient. A further date and time will then be arranged for you.

Please note: If you have had D&V (diarrhoea and vomiting) you will need to contact us to rebook your appointment unless you have been clear for the past 48 hours.

Finally

All the staff would like to make your visit as pleasant as possible. If you have any questions or concerns or if you found reading this leaflet difficult or you do not understand what it means for you, please do not hesitate to contact us:

Nuclear Medicine Department

01392 402124

or alternatively you can email us
rdh.rdenuclearmedicine@nhs.net

More information and how to get here

For more information on the department and how to get to the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital at Wonford

Please refer to the enclosed leaflet or use the Trusts website for the latest information:

www.rdehospital.nhs.uk/patients/where

For more information on the Medical Imaging Department, including Nuclear Medicine please visit our website:

www.rdehospital.nhs.uk/patients/services/medical-imaging

The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if the leaflet is not used by Royal Devon staff undertaking procedures at the Royal Devon hospitals.

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