

Procedures/Diagnostic Tests

Bone scan

You are scheduled for a bone scan. It helps your doctor find out if there is a tumor, infection, or other abnormality in your bone. This scan is a safe, effective, and painless way to make pictures of your bones. For this scan, you will be given a compound containing a small amount of radioactivity. This compound is used only for diagnostic purposes. The scan is done in the Nuclear Medicine Department.

Preparation

There is no special preparation for this scan. You may eat and drink whatever you like.

Procedure

- In the morning, a small amount of the compound (radioisotope) will be given to you by vein. You may then go back to your room.
- After the injection, try to drink extra glasses of water over the next few hours. This will help your body rid itself of the radioactivity.
- Please return to the diagnostic imaging section at the time scheduled for you by the appointment clerk: about 2 1/2 to 3 hours after the injection.
- Once you are in the imaging room, you will rest on a firm table with your head flat. During the scan, you will lie on your back.
- While you are in this position, a sensitive machine (called a scanner) will record the radiation given off by the radioisotope. Lie very still. Many pictures will be taken as the scanner moves from your head to your toes. After the scan, more pictures will be taken of your head and hands. Stay very still while these pictures are being taken.

After the procedure

There are no side effects, and the scan is painless. The only sensation you will feel will be the injection of the radioisotope in your vein.

If you have questions about the procedure, please ask. Your nurse and doctor are ready to assist you at all times.

Special Instructions

- Because it uses radioactivity, this scan is not performed in pregnant women. *If you are pregnant or think you might be pregnant, please inform your doctor immediately so that a decision can be made about this scan.*
- *Also, please inform your doctor immediately if you are breast-feeding.* Some scans can be performed in breast-feeding women if they are willing to stop breast-feeding for a while.

This information is prepared specifically for persons taking part in clinical research at the National Institutes of Health Clinical Center and may not apply to patients elsewhere. If you have questions about the information presented here, talk to a member of your health care team.

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