

Bone Scan

Your doctor has ordered a bone scan that can show early bone disease. In many cases, the test can detect this condition before it can be seen on standard X-rays. A bone scan uses a small amount of radioactive material (tracer) that is absorbed into the bones. The amount of radiation used in this test is small, and well within limits that are not considered harmful. Your total test time is about 2 hours.

Please tell your doctor or the X-ray staff if you may be pregnant or if you have had a problem with this exam in the past.

Before the Test

There is no special preparation for the test. On the day of the test, please come to the 8th Floor reception desk in the Galter Pavilion, 201 E. Huron St., at your scheduled appointment time. Parking is available for patients and visitors in the garage at 222 E. Huron, across from the Feinberg and Galter Pavilions. For discounted rates, please bring your parking ticket with you. Tickets can be validated at the Customer Services Desks on the 1st and 2nd floor of the Feinberg and Galter Pavilions, and the 1st floor of Prentice (including the Prentice 24-hour desk near the Superior St. entrance).

Be sure to bring:

- Your doctor's written order for the test.
- Insurance card.
- Medicare card (for Medicare patients).
- List of allergies & current medicines.

During the Test

When you arrive in the Nuclear Medicine department, a doctor will ask you questions about your medical history. You will then be given an IV (into the vein) injection of a radioactive tracer. If you think you might be pregnant, please inform the technologist (tech) before you are given any injection. The tech will ask you to return to the Nuclear Medicine department about 2 to 4 hours later. This time is needed for the tracer to localize into your bones. When you return, you will be asked to empty your bladder. This is done so that the pelvic and hip bones will show up clearly. You will be asked to lie down on a table and a total body image will be taken. A doctor will review your bone scan and, in most cases, will ask for extra images to obtain more detailed information.

After the Test

You may resume your normal activities and diet. The injection you were given is not harmful and will become non-radioactive within hours. The results of the test will be mailed to your doctor within 48 hours of the exam.

If you have any questions about this test, please call the Nuclear Medicine department at 312-926-2514, Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Health Information Resources

For more information, visit one of Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Health Learning Centers. These state-of-the-art health libraries are located on the third floor of the Galter Pavilion and on the first floor of the Prentice Women's Hospital. Health information professionals are available to help you find the information you need and provide you with personalized support at no charge. You may contact the Health Learning Centers by calling 312-926-LINK (5465) or by sending an e-mail to hlc@nmh.org.

For additional information about Northwestern Memorial Hospital, please visit our Web site at www.nmh.org.

Para asistencia en español, por favor llamar a el departamento de representantes para pacientes al 312-926-3112.

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Developed by: Department of Nuclear Medicine

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