

UnityPoint Health - Finley Hospital Radiology Patient/Family Information
Nuclear Medicine Bone Scan

What is a Bone Scan?

A bone scan is a painless procedure used to find areas of bone tumor, fracture, degenerative disease or infection. A very small amount of radioactive material is injected into a vein in the arm. The radioactive material then travels to the bone. A special gamma camera records this radioactivity in the bone in the form of images (or scans). The amount of radiation your body receives is similar to that received from standard x-rays.

Special Note

Before the exam, please tell your doctor if you are or think you may be pregnant or are nursing.

Preparation

Please bring your medication list with you to your exam.

If this is the only exam you are having, there are no diet or activity restrictions before or after your exam. If other exams are scheduled along with your Nuclear Medicine bone scan, you may be asked to follow other instructions. The Nuclear Medicine staff will help you understand all of your instructions.

What Happens During the Test?

You will receive an injection of a tiny amount of radioactive material into a vein in the arm, which feels similar to having blood drawn. This material is carried by the blood to the skeletal system (the bones).

If you are an inpatient, you will be returned to your room and brought back to Nuclear Medicine in 3 hours. If you are an outpatient, you will be told what time to return to Nuclear Medicine (generally 3 hours after the injection). Depending on your medical history, scanning may be done while the radioactive material is injected as well as 3 hours after the injection.

You will be asked to drink 4 to 5 (8-oz.) glasses of water or other liquids during the time between the injection and scanning. Empty your bladder frequently.

During the actual scanning, you will be asked to lie perfectly still on a cart. Scans usually take 30 minutes.

After the Exam

You may go back to your usual diet and activity after the scan. Nuclear bone scans are safe; complications or side effects are rare. You receive only a tiny amount of radioactive material. It is eliminated or disappears from your body in one or two days.

The results are interpreted by a Nuclear Medicine doctor who specializes in the analysis of these exams. The results will be sent to your doctor who will discuss them with you.

It is important that you understand your bone scan procedure. We encourage you to ask any questions of your doctor, nurse or Nuclear Medicine personnel.

When Will I Know the Results?

The radiologist will review and interpret the scan shortly after the exam is completed. A written report will be sent to your doctor. Your doctor will discuss these results with you.

Please allow your physician the time needed to review these results.

Name: _____

Exam Date/Time: _____