

Your Bone Scan explained (NDYBW, NBONW, NBONWO)

Please read this patient information carefully as it
contains information on preparing for the scan

Reference Number: ULHT-LFT-0121 v18

Issued: January 2024

Review Date: January 2026



Aim of the patient information

This patient information is for patients having a Bone Scan and aims to tell you what a Bone Scan is and what will happen.

General information

A doctor has asked that we take a picture of your bones.

If the appointment clashes with another outpatient appointment or test, or you are unable to attend on this day, please contact this department as soon as possible. We can then reschedule the test and assign the appointment to another patient.

As the test involves small amounts of radiation, we ask that you are **not** accompanied by children under 18 or anyone who may be pregnant. You may bring one adult with you to the department.

If you have mobility issues, are incontinent or claustrophobic please contact the department on the number provided.

Benefit and risks of the test

Everyone receives some radiation every day from the radioactivity in the air, food we eat and even from space. The amount of radiation in a nuclear medicine test is similar to your natural exposure over one year so the risks associated with it are low.

The main benefit of the test is making the correct diagnosis, so you can get the treatment that is right for you. This benefit is far greater than the small risk from radiation.

What does the test involve?

Part 1

The test involves giving an injection of a radioactive tracer into one of your veins in either your hands or arms. We may take pictures with a Gamma Camera (see photo) during the injection. There should be no ill effects from the injection and once given, you are free to leave the department for 2½ to 4 hours. This gives the injection time to circulate. Alternatively, you are welcome to stay in or around the department or hospital if this would be more convenient. It is important that you drink plenty of fluids after the injection. Water is available in the department.

Part 2

Once the injection has circulated, after 3 hours, you will be asked to lie flat on a bed whilst the camera takes the pictures. Occasionally you may be asked to stand or sit depending on the pictures that we need. The pictures normally take about 30 minutes, but may take up to 50 minutes if we are investigating back pain. We may use a CT attached to the camera to give us more information.

If there is any change to that timing, you will be informed on the day of the test. After the pictures have been taken, you are free to leave.

Preparation

If you are pregnant or breast-feeding you must inform the department as soon as possible as special arrangements may have to be made.

There is no special preparation required for this test. **Please eat and drink as normal.** Please bring with you a list of any medication that you are taking (your repeat prescription sheet if possible).

After the test

For the rest of the day, you must take extra care to wash your hands thoroughly after toilet use, sit down when you use the toilet and to flush the toilet twice. You must also continue to drink extra fluids and empty your bladder frequently. This will improve the clearance of the radiation from your body.

When the test is completed, the images will be reviewed and a report will be available to the doctor who has requested the test.

The camera

The Gamma Camera used to take the pictures has an open design and the majority of patients complete the test without any discomfort.

Department of Nuclear Medicine

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