

# Your Bone Scan explained (NDYBW, NBONW, NBONWO)

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

**Reference Number:** ULHT-LFT-0121 v19

**Issued:** March 2026

**Review Date:** March 2028

## 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 some pictures of your bones, particularly where they are being broken down and repaired.

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

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. The risks linked with this 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.

If you have any concerns, please contact the department in advance or ask to speak to someone on the day of your scan.

## 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.

Please bring with you a list of any medication that you are taking (your repeat prescription sheet if possible).

There is no special preparation required for this test. **Please eat and drink as normal.**

For **Paediatric** tests only (usually 0 to 15 years), please arrive at the nuclear medicine department **1 hour** before your appointment time (allows time for cannulation).

## What does the test involve?

There are two parts to this test.

### 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 photos below) during the injection. There should be no ill effects from the injection and once given, you are free to leave the department for approximately 3 hours. This gives the injection time to circulate. Alternatively, you are welcome to stay in or around the department if this would be more convenient. It is important that you drink plenty of fluids after the injection.

### Part 2

Once the injection has circulated, you will be asked to lie flat on a bed whilst the camera takes 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. 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.



## 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.

## Radiation information

If you would like to find out more about medical radiation, please access the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/medical-radiation-uses-dose-measurements-and-safety-advice>

## 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.

## Contact details

If you have any questions about any of this information, please contact the Nuclear Medicine Department on 01522 573103.

United Lincolnshire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust has worked with AccessAble to create detailed Access Guides to facilities, wards and departments at our sites.

[www.accessable.co.uk/united-lincolnshire-hospitals-nhs-trust](http://www.accessable.co.uk/united-lincolnshire-hospitals-nhs-trust)

United Lincolnshire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust endeavours to ensure that the information given here is accurate and impartial.

If you require this information in another language or alternative format, please email the Patient Information team at [ulth.patient.information@nhs.net](mailto:ulth.patient.information@nhs.net)