

Having a bone scan

Nuclear Medicine

Information for Patients

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What is a bone scan?

This is a safe and simple procedure. It uses a small amount of radioactivity to get images of your bones. It is done in a single day by a nuclear medicine technologist and/or a specialist nurse. There may also be a trainee present.

If you cannot attend your appointment, please call 0116 2583850 at least 3 days before to rearrange. This is so that we can offer your appointment to someone else.

You may get a reminder by text message if we have your mobile phone number on our system. Please make sure you respond to this.

Before your appointment, you must tell us if you:

- are pregnant, think you may be pregnant, or have just missed a period.
- are breastfeeding. This is because radioactive substances can come out in breast milk. You may be told to stop breastfeeding for a short time.
- have any pee control (incontinence) problems. This is because radioactive substances will be present in your pee (urine). You may need special instructions because of this.
- have problems with your memory or learning difficulties. We need to make sure you can follow all of the instructions for your test and after you go home.
- need an interpreter, please tell us at least 3 days before you appointment
- have help with personal care (paid or unpaid). Your carer may need some safety instructions after you have had your dose of radiation.
- are arriving by ambulance please contact Department as soon as possible.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

How do I prepare for the scan?

You will need to be well hydrated before your appointment. Have plenty to drink before attending. There is a water fountain in our waiting area if needed. You can eat and take your medications as normal.

What happens during the scan?

You will have time to talk to a member of staff about the procedure and ask any questions. You will have 2 appointments on the same day. The first will take between 15 and 30 minutes. The second between 30 minutes and 1 hour 30 minutes. The full procedure could take about 5 hours. This includes a period of 2½ to 3 hours when you are free to leave the department,

Appointment 1

- You will be given a small radioactive injection in a vein in your arm. This is no more painful than having a blood test. You are then free to leave the department until your 2nd appointment time.
- After your injection you will need to drink a lot of water and go to the toilet frequently. This will both reduce the small radiation dose you receive and improve the quality of your scan.

Appointment 2

- You will be asked to go to the toilet before entering the camera room. You will be asked to lie still on a bed and pictures will be taken of your whole body. This takes about 30 minutes. In order to get good quality pictures the gamma camera will be quite close to you and you may be left alone in the room. There is a large window and intercom so we can monitor and talk to you.
- After this we will contact our radiologist who will decide if more pictures are needed. If this is the case getting extra pictures may take up to 1 hour. This may also include the use of CT scan to get more details. This means you will get a very small extra dose of radiation.
- You may also be sent for an X-ray after the scan and this is done in the X-ray department.

What happens after the scan?

You will be radioactive after you have had your injection until the next morning. To minimise any risk to you and your friends we ask you to:

- Drink plenty of extra fluids
- Male patients should sit down to pee. Flush the toilet 2 times after use.
- Wash your hands thoroughly each time you use the toilet.
- Do not spend more than 30 minutes with anyone who is or maybe pregnant, small children and babies.
- Usually there is no problem in returning to work. Please ask staff for advice if you work with radiation or in the photographic industry.

Are there any risks?

- It is very unlikely that you will have any side effects from the radioactive injection. There is a small risk linked with the radiation you get by having this scan.
- Ionising radiation can cause cell damage that may, after many years or decades, turn cancerous. We are all at risk of having cancer during our lifetime. The normal risk is that this will happen to about 50% of people at some point in their life.
- The dose of radiation you will get from this test is very small. It is the same dose you would get from the environment in about 1.25 years. Having this test will therefore add only a very small chance of this happening to you. In fact, the risks from missing a serious disorder by not having this test may be much higher.

How will I get the results of the scan?

Your scan will be looked at by a Radiologist and the results passed on to your consultant. They will be discussed with you at your next outpatient appointment.

Useful information

- You may wish to bring a relative or friend with you. Due to the nature of the test, friends and relatives will not be allowed into radiation areas, unless we need their help.
- Please do not bring children with you to your appointment. Radiation is more hazardous for children and pregnant women than for adults. Please do not bring them into the Nuclear Medicine Department unless they are coming for a scan.
- If you need hospital transport, please see our website www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk, or call TASL on 0345 241 3012 at least 3 days before your appointment.

Further Information

For specific information about your test, please contact (answering machine checked during office hours):

Leicester Royal Infirmary: 0116 258 5627

Glenfield Hospital: 0116 258 3850

Leicester Radiopharmacy Service: 0116 258 5579

If you are not able to attend please let us know as soon as possible, so that we can offer your appointment to another patient. You may receive a reminder by text message if we have your mobile phone number on our system.

If you have a question about your medical condition please contact your GP or the doctor who made your referral.

