

What is a Nuclear Medicine Bone Scan?

A Nuclear Medicine Bone Scan is a test to look at bones and joints. We can look at many things, including arthritis, fractures, joint replacements, bone infection or cancer of the bones.

To look at the bones, we use a radioactive dye (tracer) injected into the blood stream.

If you have any questions, our staff can answer these before we start the scan.

How do I prepare for the scan?

There is no preparation for this scan.

Please call us on (04) 806 2193 if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

What happens during the scan?

You will have two appointments for this scan.

During the first visit we will give you an injection of a small amount of radioactive tracer into a vein in your arm.

Sometimes pictures are taken straight away after the injection to see how the blood flows into the bones.

Between your two appointments you will be encouraged to drink extra fluids (tea, coffee, water, juice). Emptying your bladder regularly will flush the radioactive tracer out of your system, giving us better pictures of your bones.

After about three (3) hours you will return to have pictures taken of your bones. This will take up to 60 minutes.

Is it safe?

Yes, there are no associated side effects to the radioactive injection.

The amount of radioactive material given for the scan is small.

Are there any special precautions afterwards?

We advise you to avoid prolonged close contact (1 metre) with children or pregnant women for the rest of the day - simply to avoid exposing them to any unnecessary radiation.

The radioactivity disappears naturally by a process called decay.

For children, the radiation dose is so low that there is no need for any special precautions.

Results

The Nuclear Medicine Radiologist will evaluate the results of your scan and send a report to your doctor.

The results are usually available to the referring physician two weeks after the scan.

Contact us

Phone: (04) 806 2193

Hours: 8am-4pm, Monday to Friday

Email: radiology.admin@ccdhb.org.nz