



## Nuclear medicine department

# Information about your bone scan

### What is a bone scan?

A bone scan allows us to detect areas of the bones which are growing or being repaired and helps us to identify any abnormalities. We will give you an injection containing a small amount of radioactivity called a tracer. After some time the tracer collects in the bones and then we are able to take pictures of the bones on a scanner called a gamma camera.

### Is there any preparation for my bone scan?

- Please continue to eat and drink normally and continue to take your usual medication.
- Please allow plenty of time to get to your appointment, as the tracer is individually ordered for you and scans cannot normally be delayed.
- The scan will usually be performed 3 hours after the injection. We will give you a time to return for your scan after we have given you the injection.
- Please do not bring along anyone who is pregnant or under 18 years of age.
- **You must tell us in advance if you know you are (or think that you may be) pregnant, or are breast feeding.**

### What happens during my bone scan?

Our staff will explain the procedure to you fully when you arrive for your appointment.

- For this scan we will give you an injection of a radioactive tracer, into a vein, usually in the arm or hand. It takes a few hours for the tracer to reach your bones, so you may leave the hospital.
- If you have a central venous line (either a PICC or Hickman line<sup>®</sup>) we will be able to give you the injections through it. If you have a Totally Implanted Vascular Access Device (TIVAD or Portacath<sup>®</sup>) you will need to attend the Procedures unit or blood room before your appointment in order to get it accessed.
- **You must attend for the scan at the time given to you by the technologist.**
- In the time between the injection and the scan we advise you to drink plenty of fluid and empty your bladder regularly. This helps wash out the excess tracer from your body and also makes the images clearer. You may eat as normal during this time.
- Just before the scan begins you will be asked to empty your bladder.
- We will then ask you to lie on the scan bed. We will make sure you are as comfortable as possible for the scan, as it is extremely important that you remain as still as you can.
- You will not be asked to undress, but you will need to remove all metal objects.
- Most scans last between 30 to 45 minutes.

### **Will I feel anything during my scan?**

The injection feels similar to having blood taken. There are no side effects from this injection, it will not make you feel sleepy or affect your ability to drive.

Having the pictures taken will not hurt, but if you are in a lot of pain or find it difficult to keep still, please tell us.

### **What happens after my bone scan?**

When we have checked the technical quality of your scan and are happy we have all the information we need, you will be able to leave the department.

Continue to drink plenty of fluid for the rest of the day and empty your bladder regularly. This helps wash out the tracer from your body more quickly. You may eat as normal.

A radiologist will provide a report on the scan, usually within a few days, then the results will be sent to the consultant who referred you. We will not be able to give you any results on the day.

### **How safe is the examination?**

There are small risks associated with the radioactive tracer that you have been given. However, the images give the doctors important information about your condition that helps in your treatment. The benefits of the information from the scan outweigh the small risks of exposure to radiation.

Following your injection, and for the rest of the day following your scan, you should try to avoid long periods of close contact with other people. This is to minimise their exposure to a small dose of radiation.

### **What are the benefits of my bone scan?**

A bone scan is very sensitive to bone changes and allows us to see abnormalities in the bone sometimes before they can be seen on a plain x-ray. It also allows us to look at all the bones during one examination.

### **What happens if I decide not to have the bone scan?**

If you decide not to have the bone scan, then please discuss this with the doctor looking after you.

### **What happens if I cannot keep my appointment?**

If you cannot keep your appointment, contact the nuclear medicine department as soon as possible, so that we can offer the appointment to someone else. **Please attend promptly at the time shown on the attached appointment letter.**

**If you have any questions about this appointment, or any queries about the examination, please phone the number below:**

**☎ 0161 446 3942/6**