



Bone Scan

What is a bone scan?

A bone scan is a test to look at your child's entire skeleton. It is used to diagnose causes of bone pain due to trauma, disease or other reasons. This exam requires an injection of a tracer (radiopharmaceutical) into a vein in your child's arm, hand or foot.

How do I prepare my child?

Dress your child in comfortable clothes without zippers or snaps. Sweats are a good choice.

We have videos your child can watch or they can bring their favorite video or DVD from home to watch during the scan.

If your child needs anesthesia, you will receive more instructions from the nurse practitioner the day before the scan.

How do we check in for the appointment?

Arrive 20 minutes before your scheduled appointment. Being late can affect other appointments and can delay your appointment. If you will be late, please call Radiology at 206-987-2089.

Check in at the 4th floor registration desk inside the Whale entrance. After you complete registration, you will be directed to the Radiology reception area.

What happens during the bone scan?

A technologist or nurse will place an IV in your child for the tracer injection. For some children, the technologist or nurse may inject the tracer without placing an IV. Either way, your child will only feel a little discomfort, like a mild pinch.

Depending on the area of your child's body that will be scanned and the reason for the scan, some images may be taken right after the tracer injection. These images take about 15 minutes, and your child must lie still on the scan table. Following these images, your child can leave the department, but they will need to come back in about 3 hours. If images are not needed right after the injection, your child may leave and return 3 hours later for the delayed scan.

It is important to keep your child hydrated during the break. Your child can drink water or juice and have something to eat. However, if your child is scheduled for other tests that require them to not eat or drink, please continue to follow those instructions.

The set of delayed images will begin about 3 hours after the tracer is given. Your child will have to lie still on the exam table for about 1 hour. The nuclear medicine doctor may want more images after viewing the first images.

Bone Scan

To Learn More

- Radiology
206-987-2089
- Your child's
healthcare provider
- www.seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask
your child's nurse.
- From outside the
hospital, call the
toll-free Family
Interpreting Line
1-866-583-1527. Tell
the interpreter the
name or extension
you need.
- For Deaf and hard of
hearing callers
206-987-2280 (TTY)

A bone SPECT (single photon emission computed tomography) is sometimes needed as well as the bone scan. SPECT provides a 3-D image to the doctors. This special type of picture takes an additional 30 minutes.

Anesthesia can be used for patients 5 years and under, and for those unable to hold still. You may be given different instructions to follow during the break time if your child is being given anesthesia.

You can stay with your child in the exam room unless your child is under anesthesia. Please make other arrangements for siblings.

What happens after the test?

There are no special instructions for your child to follow after the bone scan.

Results of the test will be available to the doctor who ordered the scan within 24 hours. That doctor will contact you to talk about the results.

Seattle Children's offers interpreter services for Deaf, hard of hearing or non-English speaking patients, family members and legal representatives free of charge. Seattle Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Call the Family Resource Center at 206-987-2201.

This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Seattle Children's. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's healthcare provider.

© 2007, 2011 Seattle Children's, Seattle, Washington. All rights reserved.

4/11
PE675