



Royal Cornwall Hospitals
NHS Trust

Bone scan



One + all | we care

Who is this leaflet for?

Your doctor would like you to have a nuclear medicine bone scan and has arranged for you to visit our department. This leaflet aims to answer any questions you may have, but please don't hesitate to contact us if you need any more information.

What is a bone scan?

This is a sensitive test that shows how your bone reacts to disease or fracture. It is also useful if you have unexplained bone pain.

This webpage gives further information, however the procedure may vary.

www.bnms.org.uk/page/Bonescan

Are there any alternatives?

Sometimes an MRI scan, CT scan, or X-ray can be used instead, but you may need these tests as well as your bone scan.

Do I need to prepare for it?

No, but we advise you to wear loose and comfortable clothing, preferably with no metal buttons or buckles. Eat and drink normally and keep taking any prescribed medication.

What will happen?

When you arrive in the department a small amount of a radioactive tracer will be injected into a vein in your arm. It is very unlikely that you will have any side effects from this injection.

After the injection you will be able to leave the department and return 2-4 hours later for your scan. Your radiographer/technologist will discuss the return time with you.

With any injection, there is a small risk that some of the tracer may leak around the injection site. The risk associated with this is very small (eg. reddening or darkening of skin) and we will advise on any follow up in the unlikely event that this should affect you.

How is the scan performed?

You will normally be required to lie on the imaging couch for at least 25 to 60 minutes for the scan. The camera needs to be positioned close to the part of the body being studied. You will not usually be required to remove any clothing.

Is it suitable for everyone?

If there is a chance that you may be pregnant or are breast-feeding, please contact us before your appointment date. Those patients aged between 12 and 55 years may be asked their pregnancy status. If there is any doubt we will have to rebook your test, unless the test is urgent.

If you have any special requirements regarding mobility problems, or if you suffer from urinary incontinence, please inform us before you attend your appointment so that we can make suitable arrangements to help you.

What can I do between the injection and the scan?

You can go home and return later for your scan, or you may stay with us and either purchase a meal or snack from the hospital or bring lunch with you.

Are there any risks?

We ensure that the amount of radiation you receive is as small as possible. It is similar to the natural radiation you would receive from living in Cornwall for five to seventeen months. Radioactivity is eliminated from your body very quickly and allergic reactions are very rare.

Should I take any precautions?

Yes. Please avoid non-essential contact with children or anyone pregnant for the rest of the day.

If a family member or friend usually helps you (the patient) with any personal care, please be aware that they may receive a very small exposure to radiation in the 24 hours after your scan. This radiation exposure is usually no greater than the natural, background radiation that would be received from spending a couple of weeks in Cornwall. The person who helps you will need to be informed of this exposure and agree to help you around the time of your examination. Please call nuclear medicine on 01872 252230 to discuss this with our staff.

Can I bring someone with me?

Yes, but please do not bring anyone pregnant or children unless they are the patient.

When will I get my results?

We are unable to give you the results of your scan on the day you attend.

We will send a report to your referring doctor who will contact you. If a hospital consultant arranged your scan, a follow up appointment will be arranged for you.

Where can I park?

Parking is in the pay and display car parks. There are 'dropping off' points and parking for the disabled near the main entrances. Please allow plenty of time when coming for your appointment. We recommend the park and ride service at Langarth (West Truro) and Tregurra (East Truro) which operates a frequent bus service to the Hospital.

Where is the Nuclear Medicine department?

We are located in the basement of the Tower Block. On reaching the basement follow the signs to Nuclear Medicine, which is at the end of the corridor past Medical Physics.

Contact us

If you have any queries or need any further information, please contact the Nuclear Medicine department on 01872 252290.

If for any reason you cannot attend, please inform the department so that another patient can have your appointment.

Please note that the Royal Cornwall Hospital is a smoke-free environment. Smoking is not permitted inside the hospital or on the grounds at any time.

If you would like this leaflet in large print, braille, audio version or in another language, please contact the General Office on 01872 252690

