

Contact us

If you have any queries or need any further information, please contact the Nuclear Medicine department on 01872 252330.

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



Royal Cornwall Hospitals
NHS Trust

Bone scan

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



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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.

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 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 3-4 hours later for your scan. Your radiographer will discuss the return time with you.

How is the scan performed?

You will normally be required to lie on the imaging couch for at least 25 minutes for the scan, although the scan can take up to an hour. 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. If you are a woman of childbearing age, we will ask you to confirm that you are not pregnant. If there is any doubt we will have to rebook your test, unless the test is urgent.

If you have any special requirements regarding manual handling, 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, if convenient, 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 four to sixteen 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 pregnant women for the rest of the day.

Can I bring someone with me?

Yes, but please do not bring pregnant women 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 the doctor who asked us to do the scan as soon as possible. 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.

www.cornwall.gov.uk/parkfortruro

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.