



# NUCLEAR MEDICINE BONE SCAN

## Patient Information

### What is a Bone scan?

A bone scan looks at the anatomy and function of the skeletal system. It is useful for detecting bone damage and disease processes that involve the bones.

### Preparation

There is no special preparation for the examination, and you may eat and drink normally before your appointment. You can take any medication as usual.

### Pregnancy/Breastfeeding

If you are pregnant or breastfeeding it is essential that you let us know before your appointment date.

If you are a female of child bearing age (12-55 years old), you will be asked about your pregnancy and breastfeeding status. If you are unable to confirm you are not pregnant, a pregnancy test may be performed.

### Chaperones

All patients are entitled to have a chaperone present for any consultation, examination or procedure where they feel one is required. This chaperone may be a family member or friend. On occasions you may prefer a formal chaperone to be present (ie. trained member of staff).

### The examination

Your bone examination is divided in two parts which you must attend.

After your arrival, a radiographer will explain the procedure to you and will ask you a few questions about your health records. You will then have a small amount of radioactive tracer injected into a vein in your arm. The injected tracer is carried through the bloodstream to your bones. It emits gamma rays which can be detected by a piece of equipment called a gamma camera.

Depending on the reason for your scan you may have some images taken immediately after the injection to look at the bloodstream around your bones.

Then you will be sent away and asked to return **3 HOURS** after injection for the second part of the scan. This time gap is to allow the tracer to be fully absorbed into your bones for us to see it. During this time you may eat as normal but you should drink more than usual and empty your bladder regularly as this will help to create better quality images.

Upon your return you will be asked to empty your bladder. You do not need to undress for the examination, but you may need to remove metal objects from your clothing or pockets, such as coins, jewellery and/or belts as these will interfere with the quality of the images. To begin the scan you will lay on the scanning bed with the camera placed above and below your body and the machine will move slowly acquiring images of your skeleton. The machine is very quiet and you do not go through a tube or tunnel.

### How long will it take?

The injection of the tracer takes approximately 15 minutes (including straight imaging time if required).

The later scan takes approximately 30 minutes, but may take slightly longer if additional images are required.

You are free to leave the department/hospital in the gap between the first and second part of your appointment.

### Who will be present?

Your scan will be performed by a Nuclear Medicine trained member of staff which stays with you in the room while scanning. In addition we might have students in our department who will observe the procedure if you give your permission.

### Can I bring a friend or relative with me?

You can bring a friend or relative with you and they may accompany you for the injection or scan. Because our waiting room is very small, we would prefer that you do not bring more than one person with you. It is advisable NOT to have a pregnant woman or any children with you. This is to avoid exposing them to unnecessary radiation.

### Will the injection hurt?

The injection is very similar to having blood taken. It will not make you drowsy or prevent you from driving a car.

## Is radioactivity dangerous?

The amount of radiation involved is similar to that from an x-ray examination. The radioactivity naturally disperses from the body and is largely gone in 24 hours. The very low risk involved is balanced against the benefit of the information the examination provides for your doctors.

## After the examination

You will be asked to drink more than usual for the rest of the day to help clear the substance from your body. Otherwise you can continue as normal.

## How do I obtain my results?

The results will be sent to the doctor who asked for the examination, and will normally be with them within two working weeks, but if you have an appointment sooner than this, please let us know, and we will ensure the results are available for your appointment.

## How to find us

The Nuclear Medicine department is in the main X-ray department in the purple zone at East Surrey Hospital. This is on the ground floor of the hospital, closest to the main entrance. You can also reach the department by following the main corridor from the east entrance.

**Please report to the main reception.**

## Further Information

If you need to cancel, change your appointment or have any concerns/queries about your examination, please contact the Nuclear Medicine department on: 01737 768511 x6001 (Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm).

Directions, parking and travel information for East Surrey Hospital and Crawley Hospital is available on our website at [www.surreyandsussex.nhs.uk/finding-us/](http://www.surreyandsussex.nhs.uk/finding-us/)

## Gamma Camera Appeal Fund

A gamma camera appeal fund was set up by Mr and Mrs Bell in 1987 in memory of their son David, and it has been supported by local people ever since. Initially the funds were used to purchase our first gamma camera, and since then it has been used to purchase new and updated equipment; it has also been used for continuing professional education so that staff are able to provide an even better level of service to their patients.

If you would like to contribute to the appeal fund, please send a cheque made payable to Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (Gamma Camera). Thank you.

## Contact Us

Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust  
Diagnostic Imaging Department  
East Surrey Hospital  
Redhill Surrey RH1 5RH

Nuclear Medicine Department  
Tel: 01737 768511 Ext.6001 (Monday to Friday 9 am to 5pm)  
[www.surreyandsussex.nhs.uk](http://www.surreyandsussex.nhs.uk)

## Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Telephone: 01737 231 958

Email: [pals@sash.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@sash.nhs.uk)

Write to: PALS, East Surrey Hospital  
Redhill, Surrey RH1 5RH

You can also ask a member of staff to contact PALS on your behalf.

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This information can be made available in other languages and formats, including in larger text. Contact: 01737 231 958 for help.

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