

## Bone Scan

### *How to prepare*

*This handout explains a bone scan, a procedure that is used to diagnose bone diseases. It includes how to prepare, how the scan is done, what you may feel during the scan, and how to get your results.*

### What is a bone scan?

A bone scan is a nuclear medicine exam. It uses an injection of a radioactive liquid called a *tracer* to diagnose many bone diseases. It is a form of radiology because it uses radiation to take pictures of the body.

### How does the scan work?

You will be given a small amount of the radioactive tracer through an *intravenous (IV)* line. The tracer will go into your bones and give off gamma rays. The gamma camera detects the rays and then produces pictures of your bones.



*A gamma camera will produce pictures of your bones.*

### How should I prepare for the scan?

- Drink plenty of fluids before and after your scan.
- Tell your doctor if it would be hard for you to lie flat on your back for 60 to 90 minutes.
- **For women:** Tell us if you are pregnant and/or breast feeding.

### How is the scan done?

- The radioactive tracer will be injected into one of your veins.
- We will ask you to drink plenty of fluids after the injection and before the scan starts.
- After the injection, you may leave for a while. We will ask you to return at a specific time. This will be 3 to 6 hours after the injection.

- You will need to lie flat on your back while the gamma camera takes pictures. This may take 1 to 2 hours. The technologist will help make you comfortable.
- **You must not move while the camera is taking pictures.** If you move, the pictures will be blurry and may have to be taken again.

### **What will I feel during the scan?**

- You may feel some minor discomfort when the IV line is placed before the scan.
- Lying still on the exam table may be hard for some people.
- Most of the radioactive tracer goes out of your body in your urine. The rest simply goes away over time.

### **Who interprets the results and how do I get them?**

When the test is over, the nuclear medicine doctor will review your images, write up a report, and talk with your doctor about the results. Your doctor will then talk with you about the results and about your treatment options.

#### **Questions?**

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns.

Imaging Services:  
206.598.6200