

# Bone Scan

## Information for patients and families

**Your bone scan has been scheduled for:**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location:**

Toronto General Hospital  
585 University Ave.  
Medical Imaging Reception  
1st Floor, Peter Munk Building

To cancel or reschedule your appointment call 416 340 3311.



## **What is a bone scan?**

A bone scan is a nuclear medicine test. A small amount of radioactive material is injected into your body. This material gives off energy. Then, pictures are taken of your body to see how much material is collected in your bones.

## **Why do I need this test?**

Your doctor may order a bone scan to:

- look for broken bones or a bone infection
- diagnose diseases such as cancer or to see if cancer has spread
- understand why you are having bone pain

## **How do nuclear medicine tests work?**

Nuclear medicine tests are different from x-rays. X-rays show what your body looks like. Nuclear medicine tests show how your body and organs are working. They can help find problems that other tests can't find.

Before a nuclear medicine test, you are given a medicine called a radiopharmaceutical (also called radioactive tracer). A radiopharmaceutical is radioactive. This means it gives off energy.

The radioactive tracer is usually given through an intravenous (IV) line placed in a vein. But it can also be swallowed or breathed in through the lungs.

The tracer travels to the part of the body that your doctor wants to see. When it reaches the right area, we take pictures. We use a special machine called a gamma camera. It takes pictures of the energy coming from the tracer.

## What can I expect?

1. We will inject a small amount of radioactive material (also called tracer) into a vein in your arm or hand. We may take pictures if we need to.
2. After we inject you, you will leave and come back in 2 to 3 hours. This gives your bones time to absorb the tracer.
3. Before you come back you will drink 3 to 5 cups of water or other fluid. This will help you empty your bladder and flush out extra tracer.
4. When you return, you will lie on a scanning bed.
5. We will take pictures of the areas of your body we want to check.

The test will take about 30 to 60 minutes.

There are no side effects from the test. You can go back to your normal activities once your appointment is over. Your doctor will get the results.

## How do I prepare for the scan?

- Eat and drink as you would normally before your appointment.
- Bring your Ontario health card (OHIP card). If you do not have an OHIP card, please bring another form of government-issued photo ID (such as a driver's license, passport, or other provincial health card).
- If you haven't registered, come to Toronto General Hospital 30 minutes before your appointment. Go to Patient Registration on the Ground floor near the Elizabeth Street entrance.
- Go to the Medical Imaging reception area 15 minutes before you appointment. This is on the 1st floor of the Peter Munk Building.

### **Important**

Tell technologist before you begin the test if you think you could be pregnant or you are breastfeeding. You may need to stop breastfeeding or chestfeeding for a few days.

## Who can I call if I have any questions?

The nuclear medicine department is on the 1st floor of Toronto General Hospital, EB1 – 408, near the Eaton elevators.

Call the Nuclear Medicine Department at **416 340 3311** if:

- you have any questions
- you have any worries about the test
- you need to cancel or reschedule your appointment



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