

Please tell your care team if you may be pregnant or if you have had a problem with this test in the past.

Bone Scan

A bone scan is a test that can show problems in your bones. In many cases, the test can find some bone diseases before they can be seen on standard X-rays. A bone scan uses a small amount of radioactive material (tracer) that is absorbed into your bones. The amount of radiation used in this test is small and well within limits that are not harmful to you. You will have the test in the Nuclear Medicine Department. It lasts about 5 hours.

Before the test

There is no preparation for the test.

On the day of the test, plan to arrive at your scheduled appointment time. Be sure to bring your:

- Physician's written order for the test if you have one
- List of allergies
- List of all your current medications (prescription, over-the-counter and herbal)
- Photo ID
- Medical insurance information
- Medicare card (Medicare patients only)

Come to the 8th floor Reception Desk in Galter Pavilion, 201 East Huron Street.

Parking is available for patients and visitors in the garage at 222 East Huron Street, across from Feinberg and Galter pavilions. For a discounted rate, bring your parking ticket with you. You can validate your ticket at the Customer Services Desk on the 1st, 2nd or 8th floor of Feinberg and Galter pavilions, and the 1st floor of Prentice Women's Hospital.

During the test

When you arrive in the Nuclear Medicine Department, a technologist (tech) will ask you questions about your medical history.

If you think you might be pregnant or are breastfeeding, please tell the tech before the start of the test and before you are given an injection.

The tech will put an intravenous (IV) line into a vein in your arm or hand. They will give you an injection of the radioactive tracer. The tech will ask you to return to the Nuclear Medicine department about 2 to 4 hours later. This time is needed for the tracer to collect in your bones. When you return, the scan will take about 2 hours. The tech will ask you to empty your bladder. This will help your pelvic and hip bones show up clearly. They will help you lie down on an imaging table. They will take a total body image.

A physician will review the pictures. In most cases, they will ask the tech to take more pictures to get more detailed information.

After the test

You may go back to your normal activities and diet after the test. The radioactive tracer you were given is not harmful and becomes nonradioactive within hours.

Talk with your physician about your test results. You can get a copy of your test results about 1 week after the test from the Medical Records Department on the 2nd floor of Galter Pavilion.

If you have any questions about this test, please call the Nuclear Medicine Department at 312.926.2340 (TTY: 711) Monday through Friday, 7:30 am to 5:00 pm.