Nuclear Medicine:  
Bone Scan

**WHAT IS IT?**

A bone scan is an exam that evaluates the physiology of the bone. This is different from an x-ray that examines structure.

A small amount of radioactive tracer is injected into a vein in the arm. The tracer concentrates itself in the bone enabling a physician to visualize the skeletal structure.

A bone scan is ordered for several reasons. Some reasons include stress fractures, arthritic changes, bone infection and metastatic disease.

**PREPARATION:**

There is no special preparation for this exam.

**PLEASE BRING A LIST OF CURRENT MEDICATIONS YOU ARE TAKING.**

**PROCEDURE**

There are three different types of bone scans that can be ordered. They have differences in how they are performed.

**3 Phase Bone Scan:**

You will be positioned on the imaging table and images will be taken while the radiotracer is injected in a vein. This is to assess the blood flow to the area of concern. The whole procedure will take about 20 minutes.

Once the initial images are acquired you will be asked to return three hours after the injection. This allows time for the radiotracer to concentrate in the bone. If you wish, you can leave the hospital during this time. You will be asked to hydrate yourself by drinking at least 32 to 48 ounces of liquid.

When you return, more images will be taken. This will take about 20-40 minutes depending on which area is being imaged.

**Whole Body Bone Scan**

A small amount of radiotracer will be injected into a vein.

You will be asked to return 2 ½ hours after the injection. This allows time for the radiotracer to concentrate in the bone. If you wish, you can leave the hospital
during this time. You will be asked to hydrate yourself by drinking at least 32 to 48 ounces of liquid.

Upon return, images of the whole body will be taken. This will take about 30-40 minutes.

**Bone Scan with SPECT Images**

A small amount of radiotracer will be injected into a vein.

You will be asked to return 2 ½ hours after the injection. This allows time for the radiotracer to concentrate in the bone. If you wish, you can leave the hospital during this time. You will be asked to hydrate yourself by drinking at least 32 to 48 ounces of liquid.

Upon return, images of the affected area will be taken. This will take about 45-60 minutes.

**FOLLOW-UP:**
A radiologist will read the scan and report findings to your physician. This usually takes 2-3 days.

**OUTPATIENT REGISTRATION:**

**Please arrive 5-10 minutes before your scheduled appointment time.** Park in the Mercy Medical Center Parking Ramp, located at the corner of 8th Street and 8th Avenue SE. You will be pre-registered, so you can proceed to Ground (G) level and follow the signs to “Radiology (X-Ray)”, also located on Ground (G) level.

**Your appointment date and time:**

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