Preparing your Child for a Bone Scan

A bone scan is a test that identifies problems in bones and joints. Prior to a bone scan, a safe, radioactive material is given through an IV. This material gives off radiation, which is detected by a camera. Before the bone scan your child may be asked to change into a gown.

A nurse will insert an IV into your child’s vein. Your will have the opportunity to support your child while the IV is inserted.

The radioactive material will be given through the IV. At this point, your child may be given a break of up to 3 hours before the bone scan begins.

Your child will need to stay completely still during the bone scan. Depending on age and other factors, your child may need to be sedated. Your may have the option of remaining with your child until he or she falls asleep.

Children who will be sedated must not eat or drink before the bone scan, according to their doctor’s instructions.

During the bone scan your child will lie on a bed as it moves slowly under the camera. The scan may take up to an hour to complete.

Parents are encouraged to help their child remain relaxed and still during the bone scan.

After the Bone Scan a nurse will remove the child’s IV. If your child was sedated, he or she may feel groggy. The radioactive substance will be removed through your child’s urine. Encourage your child to drink plenty of fluids.
Bone Scan Preparation Tips
Explain to your child in simple language what a bone scan is and why it is needed. Have your child practice holding completely still.

Assure your child that bone scans are safe and do not hurt. If your child will require sedation, talk to him or her about it in advance.

You may pack a stuffed animal or other comfort item for your child to hold during the bone scan. Your child may also do well watching a video or engaging in other types of distraction during the scan.

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