

Bone scan

Your child is scheduled for a bone scan at Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota.

Date: _____

Test time: _____

Check-in time: _____

Children's - Minneapolis
2525 Chicago Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55404
(612) 813-8200

Children's - St. Paul
345 North Smith Avenue
St. Paul, Minnesota 55102
(651) 220-6147

Children's West
6050 Clearwater Drive
Minnetonka, Minnesota 55343
(952) 930-8600

Please bring a list of your child's medicines and your insurance card with you. If you have questions about your insurance coverage for these services, or any special referral requirements, please contact your insurance company directly. They will advise you about your plan's coverage.

A parent or legal guardian must accompany children younger than 18 years old.

What is a bone scan?

A bone scan studies the bones in your child's body and detects fractures, infections, or other bone problems. The test is done in the Nuclear Medicine department using special camera equipment. The test

gives very little radiation to your child. A radioisotope (a clear liquid that allows us to see only the bones) is given into your child's vein. Your child will not feel the medicine or any side effects from it. The camera detects gamma rays (invisible radiation) coming from the radioisotope and creates the image (pictures) on film.

How is the test done?

A technologist will bring you and your child into an exam room and explain the test to both of you.

The technologist will start an IV in a vein, usually in the arm or hand. This involves a little poke, using a small IV (intravenous) needle. Once the IV is in place, the needle is removed and a tiny plastic tube stays in the vein. The radioisotope is given into the IV, and then the IV is taken out. Staff will work with you and your child to determine the best way to support your child when the IV is put in.

Depending on what your doctor has ordered, a first set of images may be taken right after the radioisotope is given. This set of images takes about 15 minutes.

Whether or not images are needed right after the radioisotope is given, you and your child will be asked to return to the radiology waiting room in 3 hours to complete the exam. If your child is not scheduled for any other exams with sedation or requiring an empty stomach, your child may eat and drink before and after the radioisotope is given.

When images are taken, your child will lie on the imaging bed (a lightly padded table). The camera is positioned very close to your child's body, but will not touch it. You may stand by your child's head to provide support and distraction.

The set of images that are made 3 hours after the radioisotope will take 25 to 55 minutes. Many children watch a movie (we have DVDs and videotapes here), listen to a story read by a parent, or simply rest.

A radiologist will check to see if more images are needed before you leave, and will send a report to your child's doctor.

Can I be with my child during the test?

You are welcome to stay with your child. The test will take about 4 hours. If your doctor has ordered sedation for your child, plan on being here for a total of 5 hours. See the education sheet, [Propofol \(Diprivan\) for sedation.](#)

What should we do before the test?

Usually you can maintain your child's routine eating, sleeping, and medicine schedules before the test. Your child's doctor or a Children's staff member may give you different instructions if your child will have sedation or more tests on the same day.

To learn more about preparing and helping your child cope with this test, call the child life department. Child life specialists are trained to help children understand and cope with medical procedures and can offer parents advice on how to talk with and support their children. There is no charge for child life services.

Child life department phone numbers:

Children's - Minneapolis (612) 813-6259
Children's - St. Paul (651) 220-6465
Children's West (952) 930-8773

How should I prepare my child?

Children are usually less afraid and feel more successful when they know what to expect and what is expected of them. You know your child best. The amount of detail you give will depend on your child's age and developmental level, reactions to previous health care experiences, and degree of anxiety about this test. Talking about it can help your child be more comfortable with the test, which will make the procedure easier for both of you.

Most children benefit when you use simple words to explain:

- why the test is needed. For example, "To see whether any bones are broken or aren't as healthy as they could be."
- what parts of the body will be involved, such as arm, ankle, back (use the words familiar to your child).
- what your child might see, hear, and feel, for example, there may be a small poke for the IV, lying very still under the camera.
- where parents or other significant care providers will be during the test: "I/we will be with you the whole time" or "We will be waiting in a room nearby until the scan is finished."
- that it is okay for staff to touch your child's body for this test.
- that questions are welcome at any time.

For many children, a big concern is whether or not the test will hurt. Assure them that although there may be some discomfort, it will only last a few moments. Remind them that the test is important because it helps find out how their body is working inside.

How can I support my child during this test?

Before the appointment, you and your child can:

- practice lying down and being “as still as a statue.”
- practice relaxing. Imagine being in a favorite place or doing a favorite activity.
- pack comfort items, such as a stuffed toy or blanket, some familiar books or quiet toys, a pacifier for very young children. Older children and teens may want to bring an iPod® or a hand-held video game.
- talk about how much your child wants to know about the test while it’s happening. Some children want to be told each step in advance and also while it’s happening. Others do not want all the detail; they simply want to be distracted and supported. Be sure to share your child’s wishes with the staff once you are here.

During the test

Research is clear that during stressful times, parents are most helpful to their children when they offer distraction, rather than apologies.

- Praise your child often during the test. Be specific to behaviors, such as “You’re holding still. Good for you!” or “You’re doing just what we asked you to do!”
- Talk about familiar, positive things – what your child likes, places you’ve enjoyed, activities you’re planning as a family, fun times you’ve had, successes.
- Imagine the places, things, or people you’re talking about and describe them, or have your child describe them to you. Ask open-ended questions that encourage conversation rather than those that require just a yes or no answer. For example, “Tell me what you’d like to do when we go to the pool” works better than, “We’re going to have a great time when we go swimming, aren’t we?”
- Sing songs together. Play games that require thinking, such as spelling words or adding and subtracting out loud. Ask young children such things as which animals live on a farm or in the zoo and the sounds they make, or to name all the people in their family or class, and so on.
- Read the books you brought, hold a toy so your child can see and play with it, play “Can you guess?” and give clues about people and pets you know, things you see in the room.

What can we expect after the test?

If sedation was used, your child will need to be monitored by a nurse until fully awake.

Your child may go back to normal eating and activity after this test.

You will receive the results from the doctor who ordered the test.

What else do we need to know?

On the day before the test, you may pre-register online at www.childrensmn.org. Please do this before 3 p.m. If you prefer, you can call the admitting office.

Children's - Minneapolis (612) 813-6231
Children's - St. Paul (651) 220-6878
Children's West (952) 930-8600

Pregnant women cannot be in the exam room during the test. A family member or friend, age 18 or older, may stay with your child. Siblings may not be in the room during the test. Please have an adult stay with them in the waiting room, or sign them into the Sibling Play Area (if 2 years or older). Call to ask about hours:

Children's - Minneapolis, 2nd floor
(612) 813-7051
Children's - St. Paul, 1st floor
(651) 220-7150

Plan to allow extra time before the appointment, to check your children into the Sibling Play Area.

Questions?

This sheet is not specific to your child but provides general information. If you have questions or need more information about the test, call the radiology department at the site checked on page 1.

For more reading material about this and other health topics, please call or visit the Family Resource Center library, or visit our Web site: www.childrensmn.org.

Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota
Patient/Family Education
2525 Chicago Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55404
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