



Bone Scintigraphy

Nuclear scintigraphy (also known as nuclear medicine) is the imaging technique that involves uses radioactive isotopes to diagnose and treat disease. In nuclear medicine, a radioisotope is introduced into the body which is then taken up in different amounts by different organs. A diagnosis is made in nuclear medicine by imaging the distribution of the radioactive element within the body.

Bone scans are done in two phases. In the first phase, we evaluate your pet's soft tissues (tendons, muscles, and ligaments). In the second phase, we evaluate your pet's skeleton. The radioactivity will collect in areas of bone with high activity. Areas of high activity or "hot spots" indicate areas of inflammation, infection, or tumor.

Your pet has been referred to us to help pinpoint the location of disease or evaluate the extent of disease. For example, if your pet has been limping for a period of time and x-rays and physical examination alone have not been able to localize the pain, a bone scan will be helpful in helping to determine if the pain is coming from a bone and localize the source of the pain.

Patients having a bone scan performed will need sedation so we require that you do not feed your pet on the morning of the bone scan. Water is allowed.

Most of our patients will be released the same day as their procedure, but some may require overnight hospitalization. We cannot release your pet to you immediately after their procedure because we need to allow the radioactivity to decay before they are released from the hospital according to California State law.

When you return to pick up your pet, you will be given preliminary findings from the study. One of our technicians will discuss the images from the bone scan with you and one of our radiologists will contact your veterinarian. A written report and the images from the study will also be sent your veterinarian.