

## White blood cell scan

This fact sheet tells you what a white blood cell scan is, and what is involved. Please read it before having your scan. If you have any questions, ask your doctor.

### What is a white blood cell scan?

A white blood cell scan is a nuclear medicine test to find infection or inflammation in bone or soft tissue. If a bone infection is suspected, you might have a bone scan first and a bone marrow scan afterwards. It is also called a WBC scan.

Blood will be taken from one of your veins through a needle, which is usually in your arm. White blood cells are separated from the rest of the blood sample. They are then mixed with a small amount of a radiopharmaceutical (radioactive tracer). These cells are then considered 'tagged'.

The tagged white blood cells are injected back into the vein in your arm, two to three hours later. White blood cells gather in areas of inflammation or infection.

Some hours later your body will be scanned using a special camera to take pictures of what the radioactive material is showing.

### Procedure

There is no special preparation for a white blood cell scan.

**You should tell your doctor and the imaging staff if you have any allergies, are breastfeeding, are pregnant or think you may be pregnant.**

The time for the scans may vary. The pictures are usually taken one to three hours after the injection. Each scan may last 30 to 45 minutes.

### After the procedure

A nuclear medicine physician (a specialist doctor) will look at the images and send the results to your treating doctor. You should not have any issues after the scan.

### Risks involved

All nuclear medicine tests involve some exposure to radiation, but the amount is very small and the risk of any side effects is very low.

### For further information

Nuclear medicine: Answering your questions by the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation: [www.ansto.gov.au/cs/groups/corporate/documents/webcontent/mdaw/mdax/~edisp/acstest\\_038604.pdf](http://www.ansto.gov.au/cs/groups/corporate/documents/webcontent/mdaw/mdax/~edisp/acstest_038604.pdf)

The Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency: [www.arpansa.gov.au](http://www.arpansa.gov.au)

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