



Nuclear Scintigraphy (Bone Scan)

Your horse has an appointment at B&W Equine Hospital for a bone scan. This information sheet is provided to help you understand the bone scanning process.

The horse is injected with a radioactive substance called Technetium^{99m} (Tc^{99m}) which emits gamma radiation. The radioactive isotope is injected into the horse's blood stream via intravenous injection. It then passes around the horse's circulation and is taken up by the bones of the skeleton. If an area of bone has increased activity, then more radioactive isotope will be taken up by this area. This can be in areas where it is normal to have more bone activity e.g. around joints, but also in regions where there is bone injury e.g. fractures. We use a special camera, called a gamma camera, to measure the radiation emitted with abnormal areas seen as "hot spots".

Bone scanning is useful for imaging areas of the body that are difficult to x-ray such as the pelvis and parts of the back. It can also be useful to identify either subtle or early bony damage before it is visible on an x-ray. For this reason bone scanning is particularly useful for identifying stress fractures.

What to expect

- Your horse will be admitted to the hospital the day before bone scan is scheduled to take place.
- If appropriate, your horse will be exercised gently prior to being injected with the radioactive isotope. This helps increase the uptake of the radioactive isotope within the skeleton enabling us to produce better images. Lunging is not performed if there is concern that a fracture may be present.

What to expect

- Your horse will be injected with a radioactive isotope at around 10-11am on the morning of the scan.
- Your horse will then be scanned approx. 2 hours later.
- Once the scan has been carried out your horse will return to his/her stable and has to remain in that stable until midday of the following day. Unfortunately you are unable to visit your horse during this time. This is due to safety regulations with regard to the use of radioactive materials.
- We will contact you regarding the findings of the bone scan once it has been carried out. If your horse has been referred to us we will also contact your vet.
- If your horse requires additional investigations following the bone scan, these will be performed after radioactive isolation. Depending on the additional investigations required, your horse may need to stay at the hospital for longer than the 48hrs included in your estimate. *Your estimate includes the bone scan and three nights hospitalisation; it does not include additional investigations such as radiography, ultrasonography or nerve/joint blocks.*
- Regardless of whether further investigations are performed or not, the earliest your horse can be discharged from the hospital is at least 48 hours after the initial injection of isotope to ensure radiation levels have returned to safe levels before your horse comes home. Therefore, your horse cannot be discharged from the hospital until midday of the second day after the bone scan has been performed.

[Click here to watch a video about the procedure](#)

We hope this helps you to understand what to expect but if you have any queries then please contact the hospital on 01453 811867 or referrals@bwequinevets.co.uk and one of our vets will be happy to talk to you.

IMPORTANT - CANCELLATION OF APPOINTMENT

If you decide not to keep the appointment you must notify us at least 24 hours prior to the date of the bonescan, or if the bonescan is booked on a Monday, we must receive notice of cancellation by 3pm on the preceding Friday. We reserve the right to invoice you for the cost of the isotope if cancellation is not received in this time frame.

Telephone 01453 811867 (option 2)

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