



Bone Marrow Test

Patient and Family Education

What is a bone marrow test?

A bone marrow test measures your child's blood cell production. Most blood cells are made in the marrow—the soft, spongy inner core of bones. In a bone marrow test, we collect a sample of your child's marrow. For most children, the test is done at the back of the hip. We will explain the procedure to you including the risks and benefits. Then, we will ask you to sign a consent form before the test is done.

Getting ready for a bone marrow test

This test can be painful. We can help decrease discomfort with medicines and anesthesia. Anesthesia is medicine used to put the whole body to sleep (general) or numb part of the body (local).

- **General Anesthesia in the operating room (OR):** there should only be a little soreness after your child wakes up. Your child's nurse or doctor will talk with you about this option if needed.
- **Local Anesthesia in the treatment room:** about an hour before the test, a special cream is put on the skin at the place where the test will be done. The cream is a medicine that numbs the area. A patch is put over the cream to keep it in place. Your child will be taken to a treatment room for the test. If you would like to stay with him, please talk with your child's doctor. Your child may be given sedation (medicine to make him drowsy or sleepy) or pain medicine by mouth or IV to help him get through the test.

How does a bone marrow test work?

- Your child will lie on his stomach or side. He must be very still for the test, so a nurse may help hold him.
- The doctor will clean a small area of the hip and inject more medicine to numb the area. This will pinch for a moment.
- When the area is numb, the doctor will insert the bone marrow needle into the hipbone and collect the sample.
- After the doctor removes the needle, the nurse will hold a gauze pad over the site for a few minutes and apply a bandage.

The test takes about 20 minutes. After the test, the site may be sore for a day or two. Your child's marrow sample will be checked, and your child's doctor will discuss the results with you within a day or two.

What can I do?

You can teach your child a few things to make the test easier:

- Crying and saying "ouch" is OK.
- He can also:
 - Count to 10
 - Squeeze someone's hand
 - Take short, quick breaths
 - Sing a song
 - Imagine being in a happy place

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room right away.

This is general information and is not specific medical advice for your child. Always consult your child's doctor or other healthcare provider if you have any questions or concerns about the care or health of your child. A Children's Healthcare of Atlanta pediatric advice nurse is available 24 hours a day at 404-250-KIDS.

Bone Marrow Test, continued

When should I call the doctor?

Check the site closely for 2-3 days. After the test, you may notice a small amount of bleeding or drainage on the dressing. This is normal. Call your child's doctor **right away** if you notice:

- Any bright red bleeding that soaks through the dressing.
- Any signs of infection at the site, such as:
 - Redness or any change in color or temperature
 - Swelling
 - Foul smelling drainage

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