



the Physicians of Oncology Hematology West

Bone Marrow Biopsy

Bone marrow is the soft tissue inside bones that helps form blood cells. It is found in the hollow part of most bones. A bone marrow biopsy is the removal of marrow from inside bone.

How a bone marrow biopsy is performed: The test is performed in our office by one of our highly trained Nurse Practitioners. For many of our patients this is a more comfortable and convenient way to have the procedure and allows you to resume your normal activities, including returning to work, directly after the procedure is complete.

The skin on your pelvic bone will be cleansed and a numbing medicine will be injected into the area, down to the surface of the bone. Once the area is numb, a biopsy needle will be inserted into the bone and liquid bone marrow is removed. A tiny sample, or core, of bone marrow is also removed. After the sample is obtained, a bandage will be applied and you lie flat for several minutes.

How the test will feel: You will feel a sharp sting when the numbing medicine is injected. You may also feel a sharp brief pain when the liquid bone marrow is removed and the biopsy needle may also cause a brief, dull, pain. Since the inside of the bone cannot be numbed, this test may cause some mild to moderate discomfort.

Why the test is ordered: Your doctor may order this test if you have abnormal types or numbers of red or white blood cells or platelets on a complete blood count (CBC). This test is used to diagnose infections, some types of anemia, other blood disorders or cancer such as leukemia. It may also be used to help determine if a cancer has spread or responded to treatment.

How to prepare for the test: Please tell us all medications you are taking and if you are allergic to any medications or to latex. We also need to know if you have any bleeding problems or if you are pregnant.

Normal results: A normal result means the bone marrow contains the proper number and types of blood-forming (hematopoietic) cells, fat cells, and connective tissues.

What abnormal results mean: Abnormal results may be due to cancers of the bone marrow (leukemia, lymphoma, multiple myeloma) or other cancers. The results may detect the cause of too many or too few red blood cells, abnormal white blood cells, or too many or too few platelets.

Risks: There may be some bleeding at the puncture site. More serious risks, such as serious bleeding or infection, are extremely rare.