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nationwidechildrens.org

## BONE MARROW ASPIRATION TEST

Bone marrow is the spongy material found in the center of many bones in the body. The different cells that make up blood are made in the bone marrow. A bone marrow aspiration test is done to see if the blood cells are being made properly.

### BEFORE THE TEST

About 1 to 2 hours before the test, a small amount of cream will be placed on the skin where the test will be done (usually on the hip bone, spine, or leg bone). It will be covered with a bandage. This cream, called EMLA<sup>®</sup> cream, will numb your child's skin.

### THE TEST

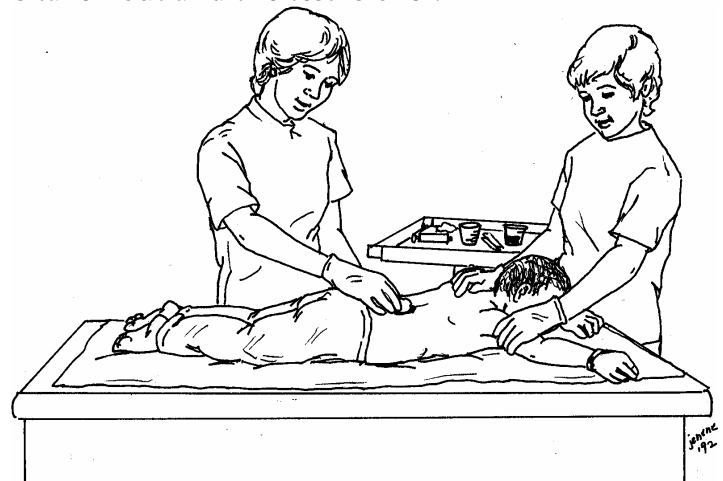
When it is time for the test, a doctor or nurse will go with your child to the room where the test will be done. A parent or guardian may also be present to help comfort your child.

- The nurse practitioner will inject a small amount of numbing medicine into the skin. This may sting at first.
- Your child will either sit or lie on a table, and will be helped to hold very still. Medicine to help your child relax is usually given. Your child will be checked often by health care professionals during and after the test.
- The bone marrow site will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution. This may feel cold. After the skin is washed well, sterile towels will be placed around the clean area where the bone marrow aspiration test will be done.
- After the area is numb, a needle is placed into the bone and a small amount of bone marrow is pulled up into a syringe. During this part of the test, your child may feel pressure or pain for an instant or a cramp in the leg. Then the needle is taken out and the test is over.

### AFTER THE TEST

Pressure is applied to the site for 1 to 2 minutes after the test. Your child will be asked to lie on his back for 15 to 30 minutes. Then a pressure dressing is applied. This dressing should stay on for 24 hours, and be checked often for bleeding. Let your nurse know if you see bloody drainage on the dressing.

- Your child should not take a tub bath or shower while the dressing is in place.
- After 24 hours remove the dressing. Your child may go back to normal activity when any effects of the medicine are gone.



The bone marrow that has been collected will be studied under a microscope. Your child's doctor will have the test results within 48 hours.

If you have any questions, be sure to ask your nurse or doctor.