Bone Marrow Procedure Guide

What is a Bone-Marrow Procedure?
During this procedure, bone marrow is withdrawn through a needle placed in your bone. The marrow is then examined under a microscope.

Think of your bone marrow as a wet sponge. If bone marrow is aspirated, some fluid is sucked out of the sponge. With a bone marrow biopsy, a tiny piece of the marrow is cut out. You may have one or both of these procedures.

What is the purpose of a Bone Marrow Procedure?
This procedure is done to see how your blood cells are being formed. The number and type of blood cells, the amount of iron, and if there is any sign of a tumor or infection.

You have three (3) kinds of blood cells: red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets. Their parent cells are in your bone marrow where they multiply, mature, and get into the blood. A blood test is unable to tell about all the details of this process, so cells from your bone marrow are tested.

How long will it take?
This procedure will take about 20 minutes, including the time needed to prepare your skin.

Will I need to do anything before the procedure?
No, you do not have to prepare in any special way. If you are at risk for bleeding, however, you may have a platelet transfusion before the procedure is done.
Where will the bone marrow be taken from?

The bone marrow will be taken from one of the parts of your body that is shaded in the picture below. You will be asked to lie on your side, stomach or back, close to the edge of the bed for the procedure.

What will the procedure be like?

First, your doctor will press gently around the area. Next, the area will be washed with a cleaning agent, which will feel cold. Sterile towels will be placed around the area. A numbing medicine will be injected into the area to help lessen the pain. You will feel a stick from the needle and a burning feeling as the numbing medicine is put into the skin. It takes about a minute for the medicine to work. Here is information about each procedure:

- **Aspiration:** Once the area is numb, a special needle is put through your skin. The doctor will put slight force on the needle as it enters the bone. You may feel some pressure. After the needle is in, a syringe is attached to take out some of the fluid. You may feel a sharp pain, deep inside, but it lasts only a few seconds. Taking a deep breath or using a relaxation technique often helps. Ask your nurse for information about relaxation techniques.

- **Biopsy:** Through this same spot, a special needle will cut out a tiny piece of marrow, called a core. This usually does not cause any pain, but you may feel pressure as the needle is turned. The needle will then be removed and a band-aid or dressing will be applied.

Is there any special care needed after the procedure?

Keep the bandage dry and in place for 24 hours. As the numbing medicine wears off you may need something for pain. Ask your doctor for pain medicine if needed.

Bone Marrow Procedure Guide
Bleeding may happen after this procedure. You may be asked to lie on the area where the needle was placed for about 30 minutes. The area will be checked for bleeding. If you have a low platelet count, you will need to put pressure on the area for a longer amount of time.

- **Patients who had the procedure done while in the hospital should call the nurse if the dressing feels wet.**

- **Patients who had the procedure done in the clinic should check their dressing.** If you see bleeding bigger than the size of a quarter in 1 hour on the dressing, lie on the area for 30 minutes. If the bleeding continues, call your doctor.

**How long before the results are known?**

It may take a full week before the results are complete. A follow-up appointment may be scheduled with your doctor to review the results.