

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.

THE TEST

The doctor or pediatric nurse practitioner will choose a place (usually on the hip bone, spine, or leg bone) to withdraw the bone marrow.

- About 1 to 2 hours before the test, a small amount of cream will be placed on the skin and covered with a bandage. This cream, called EMLA® cream, will numb your child's skin. Just before the test, a small amount of numbing medicine may be injected into the skin. This may sting at first.
- Your child will either sit or lie on a table. A health care professional will help your child 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.

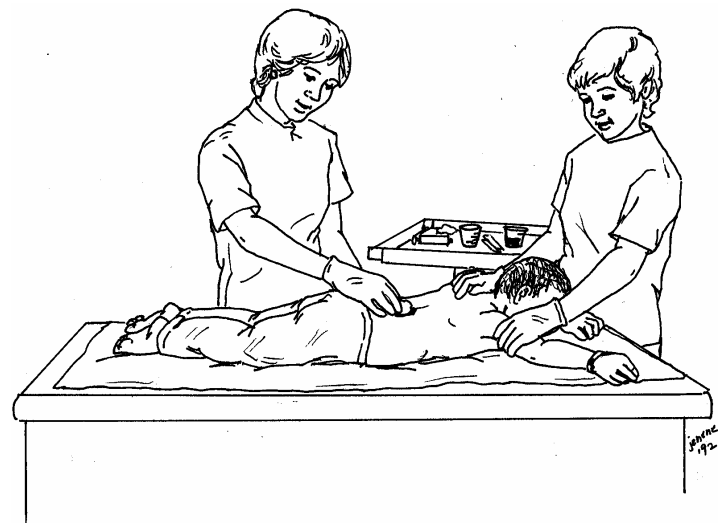
AFTER THE TEST

Pressure is applied to the site for 1 to 2 minutes after the test. A pressure dressing is then applied. This dressing should stay on for 24 hours, and be checked often for continued bleeding.

- Your child should not take a tub bath or shower while the dressing is in place.
- After 24 hours remove the dressing. Let your nurse know if you see bloody drainage on the dressing. Your child may go back to normal activity when any effects of the medicine are gone.

The bone marrow that has been removed 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.



Picture 1 Having a bone marrow aspiration test.