Bone scintigraphy

A bone scan or bone scintigraphy /sɪnˈtɪgrəfi/ is a nuclear medicine imaging technique of the bone. It can help diagnose a number of bone conditions, including; cancer of the bone or metastasis, location of bone inflammation and fractures (that may not be visible in traditional X-ray images), and bone infection.

Nuclear medicine provides functional imaging and allows visualisation of bone metabolism or bone remodeling, which most other imaging techniques (such as X-ray computed tomography, CT) cannot.

Bone scintigraphy competes with positron emission tomography (PET) for imaging of abnormal metabolism in bones, but is considerably less expensive.

Bone scintigraphy has higher sensitivity but lower specificity than CT or MRI for diagnosis of scaphoid fractures following negative plain radiography.