

MRI

A guide to your scan

**What is an MRI scan?**

MRI means ‘Magnetic Resonance Imaging’. It is an imaging technique using a strong magnetic field to produce high-quality pictures of the internal structure and function of your body. It is very useful for looking at soft tissue structures, such as muscles and ligaments.

**Is it safe?**

MRI has been used for over 25 years in this country, and there are no known side effects.

**Due to the magnetic field, safety is very important. To make sure you are safe to have an MRI scan, you should contact us if you answer ‘yes’ to any of the following:**

You are pregnant or may be pregnant.

You have a cardiac pacemaker.

You have had any type of heart surgery.

You have a cochlear implant, neurostimulator, or programmable hydrocephalus shunt.

You have any metal implant in your body.

You have had an injury to your eyes involving metal or metal fragments.

You have had any operations on your head, eyes, ears or spine.

**Who will I see?**

You will see a small team of radiography staff who will care for you during your visit.

**Do I need an injection?**

For some examinations, we may need to give you an injection of a dye (known as a contrast medium) into a vein, to increase the amount of information we can get from the scan. As with all injections, there is a very small risk of an allergic reaction. Our medical teams are trained to deal with this if it happens. If you have reacted to any other injection given for a kidney X-ray (IVP or IVU) or a previous scan, please let the radiographer know before the injection takes place.

**Before the scan**

We will ask you some safety questions when you book your appointment, and you will need to fill in a safety questionnaire that we will send you with your appointment letter. Please remember to bring this with you to your appointment.

Unless we let you know you do not need to make any special preparations before your MRI scan and you can continue to eat and drink as normal and take any prescribed medicine.

**There are a few simple instructions that you need to follow before the scan:**

* *You should come dressed in clothes without zips or metal buttons if you can.*
* *You should leave any valuable possessions, such as jewellery or watches, at home.*
* *You should arrive 10 minutes before your appointment.*
* *You should tell us about any special circumstances (for example, if you need wheel-chair access, if you are hard of hearing, if you have poor eyesight or if you are claustrophobic)*

**What happens during my appointment?**

When you arrive you should go to the reception.

The radiographer or another member of staff will meet you and explain the procedure to you. We will check your safety questionnaire once more.

We may ask you to change into a gown. If you need to change, your clothes and personal items will be kept in a secure place.

You will be asked to lie down on the MRI bed and we will make you as comfortable as possible. The radiographer will move you into the scanner. You will be asked to stay as still as possible and you will be given either ear defenders or ear plugs to wear because of the scanner noise.

The examination is made up of a series of scans. There is a short pause between each scan.

The radiographer operating the scanner will talk to you between scans.

*If you have difficulty during a scan you will be able to use an emergency call bell in case you need any help.*

**Will it be uncomfortable?**

We will make you as comfortable as possible. You will hear some loud mechanical sounds from the scanner which is completely normal.

**How long will it take?**

Most scans take around 30 minutes but some can take up to two hours, depending on the area being scanned.

**After your scan**

You can eat and drink normally

You can drive home afterwards and return to work if you need to.

**Are there any side effects?**

There are no known side effects from having an MRI scan.

**When will I get the results?**

A radiologist will check the scan results shortly after your appointment and will send a report to your doctor or consultant. At the time of your appointment you will be told how long this should take.

If a follow up appointment is not already arranged, you will need to contact your doctor or

consultant to make an appointment to get your results.

**Can I bring a relative or friend with me?**

Yes, but they will only be allowed into the scan room in special circumstances (for safety reasons) and only after they’ve filled in a questionnaire which shows that they are safe to enter the magnetic field.

***Children will not be allowed into the scan room while you are having the scan, so you will need to make arrangements for them before you come to your appointment. Staff are unable to assist.***

**Contacting us**

If you need any more information please contact us on the number given in your appointment letter.