

MRI

A guide to your scan



What is a 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, for example muscles and ligaments.

small risk of an allergic reaction, ranging from minor reactions such as a skin rash to the more serious such as an asthma attack. 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.

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 implants 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.

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).
- If you are diabetic, please contact us for advice.

Who will I see?

You will see a small team of radiography staff who will care for you during your visit. One of the radiographers will carry out the examination.

Do I need an injection?

For some examinations, we may need to give you an injection of a substance (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

What happens during my appointment?

- When you arrive you should go to the reception desk (please bring your appointment letter which may have details of who to ask for).
- The radiographer or another member of staff will meet you and explain the procedure to you.
- We will check your safety questionnaire once more (or ask you to fill one in if you haven't already).
- 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.
- We will give you the chance to ask any questions.
- You will be asked to lie down on the MRI bed and we will make you as comfortable as possible. The radiographer will position you so that the part of your body to be scanned is in the middle of 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 three to five-minute scans (depending on which part of you is being examined). There is a short pause between each scan.
- The radiographer operating the scanner will help you through the procedure and will talk to you between each scan.
- 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 the 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, if this will help you feel more comfortable during your scan. The person you bring must complete a safety questionnaire on the day to ensure their own safety, and remove all metal objects before they enter the scan room with you.

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.

Contacting us

It is very important to us that you have been given all the necessary information so that your scan is carried out successfully. Please contact us on the number given in your appointment letter if you have any questions, concerns or suggestions.

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