

MRI Patient Information

Your doctor has requested an MRI scan. Here are some answers to some frequently asked questions.

What is MRI?

MRI stands for Magnetic Resonance Imaging. It is a painless and safe diagnostic procedure that uses a magnet and radio waves to produce detailed images of the body. An MRI machine does not use any x-rays or radiation. A computer converts the signals received from the MRI machine into diagnostic images of the body. It can be used to image any part of the body.

What happens when I have an MRI?

When you present for your MRI you will be asked to fill out an MRI screening questionnaire. All metallic objects on your body will need to be removed because of the strong magnetic field within the scanner. If you have certain types of metallic objects within your body you will be unable to have the scan because of the magnetic field. The patient then lies on the MRI table which will slide into the large doughnut shaped magnet. The technician will then place a coil which attaches to the MRI table over the area of the body being examined. The machine will then be adjusted and the MRI will begin. During the procedure you will hear several loud, repetitive pulsing noises in a series; this is when the machine is obtaining images. It is important to stay completely still during these sequences of noise as movement will spoil the diagnostic images.

Are there special instructions to be followed before a MRI scan?

For most MRI examinations no special preparation is required, except for the removal of all metallic objects from the body.

Under certain conditions when a specialised MRI needs to be performed dietary restrictions will apply these include when:

- The MRI examination requires injection of gadolinium, a contrast agent which is used for image enhancement.
- When sedation or anesthesia is necessary for the patient to have the MRI.

Is an MRI scan uncomfortable or painful?

It is not painful. Sometimes a patient will have to be placed in an uncomfortable position, if you find you are unable to tolerate this position let the technician know before they start the examination as any movement during can spoil the images. Some patients will find the examination claustrophobic. It may help to see the MRI room prior to your appointment. If you would like to do so please contact staff at reception. If required sedation can also be administered prior to your examination occurring.

How long does an MRI scan take?

Depending on the purpose of the scan and the area of the body being imaged you may need to spend anywhere from half an hour to two hours at the practice. This will vary and you will be told more details when booking your appointment.

You will be asked to wait for your films and results will be forwarded to your referring doctor within the same day of your examination.

You will need to inform the radiographer performing the exam if you are pregnant or there is a possibility that you may be pregnant.