

MRI SCAN

WHAT IS MRI?

MRI stands for 'magnetic resonance imaging'. It is an imaging technique that uses strong magnetic field and radio waves to create images of tissues, organs and other structures inside your body.

WHO WILL I SEE?

The staff of the Radiology Department will look after you during your visit and a radiographer will carry out your examination.

IS IT SAFE?

MRI scans are painless and are thought to be safe. However, due to the use of a strong magnet, please contact us before your scan if you answer yes to any of the following:

- You are or think may be pregnant
- You have an internal defibrillator or pacemaker
- You have artificial heart valves
- You have metal implants in your body
- You have an implanted drug infusion port
- You have cochlear implant

- You have had an injury to your eyes or body involving metal fragments
- You have special needs.

DO I NEED AN INJECTION?

For most scans, an injection is required to increase the amount of information that can be obtained. This depends on the type of scan your Consultant has requested.

BEFORE YOUR SCAN

For most scans, there is no special preparation required. Please continue with your normal diet and take medication unless instructed otherwise.

When we book your appointment, we will ask you some safety questions and give you full instructions.

Please contact us 24 hours prior to your appointment to confirm your attendance. Do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

ON THE DAY OF YOUR SCAN

Please report to the reception desk, after which you will be shown where to wait until collected by a radiographer or another member of staff.

You may be asked to complete a detailed questionnaire. The procedure for your examination will be explained to you.

If you need to undress for your MRI scan, private changing rooms and lockers are provided.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING MY APPOINTMENT?

In the MRI room, you will be asked to lie on the scanner bed. Our MRI scanner has a wide, short bore, which means that for many types of scans, your head will not be within the scanner.

Depending on the type of scan you are having, a mould may be put over the area of interest to enable clearer images to be obtained. The radiographer is able to talk you during the scan. You will be

asked to stay and may be given breathing instructions.

The radiographer will position you and then go into the Control Room to start the scan. You will be given a call bell to press if you need assistance. The examination is made up of a series of three to five minute scans.

WILL IT BE UNCOMFORTABLE?

We will position you as comfortably as possible on the scanner table. During the scan there will be a variety of loud mechanical noises, which indicates when the scanner is taking images of you. You will be given headphones to reduce this noise and through which you can listen to music and you can hear us talking to you.

You may feel uncomfortable from having to lie still.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

The average scan length is 30 minutes, but can take longer, depending on the type of scan your Consultant has requested for you.

AFTER YOUR MRI?

After your MRI you will feel no ill effects. You may drive and return to work.

ARE THERE ANY SIDE EFFECTS?

If you require an injection for your scan, there is a very small risk you may have a reaction to the contrast used, such as a skin rash or nausea. We have qualified medical staff in the department who are trained to deal with this.

WHEN WILL I GET THE RESULTS?

The images will be checked by a radiologist after you visit and a report sent to your referring doctor normally within 24 hours.

CAN I BRING A RELATIVE OR FRIEND?

Yes, but for reasons of safety, they will not be able to accompany you into the examination room, except in very special circumstances. If you are bringing children with you, they will not be allowed into the MRI room and you will need to make arrangements for their care.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you have any further questions, please contact the Radiology Department on 020 7935 7700 and a member of the team will be happy to help you.

Please let us know about any special needs you have (e.g. wheelchair access, if you are hard of hearing, have poor eyesight or if you are claustrophobic).