



Cardiac Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI scan)

About this booklet

This booklet provides information about your cardiac Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scan, including what to expect before, during and after your scan.

What is MRI?

An MRI scanner uses a very strong magnet and radio waves to produce images of the body. These images can be used to diagnose and treat a wide range of health conditions. MRI does not use radiation, and there are no known long-term health risks.

Whilst MRI is safe for the majority of people, certain implants and devices must be reviewed before your scan as there may be cases where we may not be able to scan you. This is for your own safety.

Please complete your safety checklist prior to your appointment. If you answer yes to any of the questions highlighted on your appointment letter, please phone our Booking team on the number noted in your letter.

What is a cardiac MRI?

A cardiac MRI looks at your heart and major blood vessels. Hundreds of still and moving images will be taken of your heart to look at its structure and to see if it is functioning correctly.

The scan will take between 40-60 minutes.

Before the scan

Once in the department we will take your height, weight and you will be required to change into a hospital gown. All personal belongings including mobile phones, jewellery and any metal objects must be removed and placed into a locker. The key will remain with you at all times.

A member of staff will check through the safety checklist with you before the scan, and you will have the opportunity to ask any questions. Some scans of the heart require an injection of MRI contrast, in which case a cannula will be inserted into one of the veins in your arm. The contrast helps us have a more detailed look at the heart muscle. The radiographer will inform you if this is required and we may ask questions about your medical history.

During the scan

The MRI machine looks like a large cylinder, with a padded table which slides into the magnet opening. You will be asked to lie flat on the table, and the radiographers will require access to your chest area in order to apply Electrocardiogram (ECG) electrodes. They will clean your chest with a cold and scratchy gel so that the electrodes stick correctly.

The ECG leads are then connected to the electrodes. You will be given earplugs and headphones as the scanner will make loud knocking / banging sounds during the scan. You will be provided with a contact buzzer; this is to be used if you require assistance from the radiographers during the scan.

A piece of equipment is then placed on your chest and you will move into the scanner until your chest is in the middle. The scanner is open at both ends and the radiographer can see you at all times. It is important that you lie perfectly still during the scan as any movement can affect the quality of the images.

During the scan you will also be given breathing instructions through the headphones. It is important to follow these instructions, if you have breathing difficulties please make the radiographer aware.

After the scan

Once the scan is complete you will be able to get changed. If a cannula was placed into your arm for the scan it will be removed. You can then leave the department and continue with your day.

The scan is reported by a radiologist or cardiologist and the results are sent to the doctor at your referring hospital. This can take up to 6 weeks.

Further Information

Scanning the QR code below, or using the following link, will take you to the British Heart Foundation website, where you can watch a video demonstrating the cardiac MRI procedure.



<https://www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/tests/mri-scans>

Notes

Notes

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