



Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI scan)

About this booklet

The purpose of this booklet is to help you understand Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) and to let you know what to expect before, during and after the procedure.

Please note you must complete your enclosed checklist and telephone the number on your appointment letter if you answer yes to any of the questions.

What is Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)?

It is a procedure which uses a very strong magnet, and radio waves to visualise structures within the body. This causes your body to give off signals; these are sent to a computer and converted into images on the screen.

MRI is quite painless and safe for most people. However, certain circumstances should be highlighted. **The MRI scan cannot be performed if you have a cardiac pacemaker or aneurysm clips; this should be discussed with your doctor prior to the scheduled appointment.** Typical scan times are 30 minutes, but may vary.

Before the scan

Any special preparation required is stated on your appointment letter. You must not take anything into the scan room. All jewellery, credit cards and metal objects must be removed. You should avoid wearing make-up prior to the scan, as some make-up contains tiny metal specks.

Check with your doctor if you have any questions about getting ready for your MRI scan.

During the scan

You will be asked to undress and put on a gown. The MRI machine looks like a large cylinder with a padded table that slides into the Magnet opening. You will be asked to lie flat on the table. The radiographer will move you into the correct position for the scan and give you a buzzer to alert them if you have any difficulties. You will not be totally enclosed and you will be able to talk to the Radiographer through an intercom between scans. They will be nearby at all times.

While the scan is taking place you will hear a loud tapping noise, which is quite normal. This is the scanner taking the images. We will give you earplugs to reduce the noise and you can bring along a CD, mp3 device or ipod. The couch may also move occasionally as the Radiographer scans different parts of your body.

It is very important that you relax and try to lie as still as possible during the scan. There is a microphone inside the scanner, and if you have any problems at all, you can speak to the Radiographer. Sometimes the images are not clear and the Doctor may decide to inject contrast medium (x-ray dye) which will help to outline different areas of the body and will help the doctor with your diagnosis. This injection is administered via a venflon into a vein in your arm. If you are having an injection we will ask you further questions about your medical history and we will explain what happens during the injection of contrast media. If you have any other questions or doubts then please do not hesitate to ask the member of staff carrying out your scan, they will be happy to help you.

After the scan

Once the scan has finished you can get dressed and eat and drink normally. The Radiographer will ensure that you are comfortable and ready to leave the department. The scan is reported by a Radiologist and the result will then be sent to the doctor at your referring hospital.

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