Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)
Patient Information

Your consultant or doctor has arranged for you to have a scan using Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI).

This leaflet provides information about the scan and answers questions commonly asked by patients. It is essential that you read it before you come to hospital for your scan. If you have any further questions please speak to the radiographer when you come for your appointment.

Your MRI scan

MRI combines a powerful magnet with a sophisticated computer to detect small changes in the body’s own magnetic field and give detailed images of any part of the human body. No x-rays are used and there are no known side-effects.

Safety

There are no known side-effects to the scan but it does involve a powerful magnet, which can be very hazardous for certain patients. Therefore some patients cannot be scanned for safety reasons.

Before you come for your scan you must complete the safety questionnaire. This asks you questions to find out if you have any ‘contra-indications’ for an MRI scan (any reasons why you cannot have a scan).

We cannot scan patients who have any of the following - please telephone us immediately if you have any of these:

- Cardiac (heart) pacemaker or cardioverter defibrillator (pacing wire);
- Cochlear implant;
- Neurostimulator;
- Aneurysm clip.

Patients with any of the following might not be able to be scanned. Please telephone us and we will ask you further questions to find out whether we can scan you:

- Occlusive clip/staple;
- Implanted drug infusion pump;
- Hydrocephalus shunt;
- Metal fragments or shrapnel in the eye;
- Heart valve;
- Intravascular stent/filter/coil;
- Ocular (eye) implant;
- Retinal tack;
- Penile implant;
- Tissue expander/implant e.g. breast;
- Any other metallic or magnetic implant;
- Metal fragment/s, shrapnel, bullet/s or pellet/s in the body.
Please also telephone us before your appointment if you are pregnant (or if you think you could be pregnant). There is no specific evidence that an MRI scan can cause harm to an unborn baby, but we prefer not to scan women in early pregnancy unless absolutely necessary.

Patients who have kidney problems, or who have had or are waiting a liver transplant, may not be able to have contrast media. This is the name of a special dye often used in MRI scans to help improve the quality of the pictures taken. Please telephone us before your appointment if this applies to you, or if you have previously had an allergic reaction to contrast media.

Please tell the MRI staff prior to your appointment if any of the above points apply to you by telephoning the Imaging Department on 01246 512627.

Some patients can be scanned safely, but we have to take a few special precautions. Therefore please let us know when you come along for your scan, if you have any of the following (you don't need to call us beforehand):

- Hip/knee joint replacement;
- Trilucent™ breast implant;
- Tattoo;
- Indwelling catheter (tube placed in your body to drain urine)

Dental work including fillings do not contain ferrous material and are therefore not a problem.

**Before the scan**

Please arrive 10 minutes before your stated appointment time. This is because the MRI staff will check through your completed questionnaire with you just before you have your scan. This may be checked several times.

Metal objects such as clothing zips, clasps and buckles can disrupt the scan image so you will be asked to change into a top and trousers that we provide. Or you may prefer to bring your own light, comfortable clothing that does not have any metal fasteners, such as a tracksuit or cotton pyjamas, to change into.

You will also be asked to remove the following items before having your scan:

- Jewellery (you may keep your wedding ring on)
- Hearing aid
- Metal dentures
- Bank or other card with magnetic strip (e.g. library/swipe card)
- Skin patches
- Body piercings
- Spectacles
- Watch
- Any loose metal objects e.g. money, keys
- Possibly eye make-up (mascara and eye liner contain iron!)

We will store your valuables securely in a locker while you have your scan.
The Scan

The radiographer will position you on a comfortable couch. The scanner is open at both ends with a light breeze flowing through. All you will need to do is remain very still while in the scanner. You will hear a repetitive drumming noise which is quite normal. You will be given ear protection.

You will be able to communicate with staff using a two-way intercom or a call button.

You may wish to bring a CD or ipod to listen to and play on the department’s equipment while you are having your scan.

We may need to give you an injection of contrast media during the scan. This is a special dye often used in MRI scans to help improve the quality of the pictures taken.

How long will it take?

Every scan is different, but the average is 15-30 minutes. Please allow 2 hours for your visit in total.

What happens afterwards?

A consultant radiologist examines the pictures that have been taken and a report is sent to the doctor who sent you for the scan. Please ask your doctor when and how you will get your results.

Who can I contact for further information?

We hope that you have found this leaflet useful. If you have any other questions please call us on 01246 512627.