



WHAT IS MRI?

MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) is a sophisticated diagnostic scanning technique which uses magnetism and radio waves to produce detailed images of the human body.

IS IT SAFE?

There are no known risks or side-effects associated with MRI. Unlike traditional X-Rays or CT scans, MRI does not use ionising radiation. Therefore, the test can be performed repeatedly without adverse effect.

WHAT IF I'M PREGNANT?

Although, we prefer not to perform MRI scans within the first three months of pregnancy, if the MRI scan cannot wait, it is safer than having an X-ray or a CAT scan.

WHAT'S ALL THE FUSS ABOUT METAL?

MRI should not, however, be performed on people with certain metal objects implanted in their bodies, such as pacemakers, cochlear implants and some surgical clips. These objects may malfunction or may be dislodged by the powerful magnetic field.



For this reason patients and all persons entering the MRI scanning room are asked to complete a safety questionnaire which is checked by the radiographer prior to admission to the room.

HOW DO I PREPARE FOR THE SCAN?

Wear loose comfortable clothing with as little metal in the fastenings as possible. (You may not then need to change into a gown for certain examinations)

Tell us or your referring doctor if you have any allergies (in case you need to have a gadolinium contrast injection)

In most cases we are able to offer you a choice of music to listen to during your scan (depending on the exact examination that you are having) but please feel free to bring along a CD of your choice. If you wish you may also bring someone along to stay with you during the scan but please remember that they will also need to fill out a safety questionnaire and remove loose metal objects etc, before entering the scan room.

CAN I EAT AND DRINK NORMALLY BEFORE THE SCAN?

In most cases it is fine to eat and drink normally

prior to the scan except for MRI

Abdominal / Pelvic scans

(in this case you will be advised

by the radiographer or your

referring doctor to avoid food and fluids for 4
hours prior to your scan)



WHAT HAPPENS TO ME DURING THE SCAN?

Following a check of the Safety Questionnaire, you will be asked to remove all metallic objects and if necessary, change into a comfortable gown. Your personal belongings will be placed in a locker for safe-keeping. You will then be made comfortable on the scanner bed and moved into position for the scan. Because the scanner makes loud “tapping” noises during the scan you will be offered headphones or ear-plugs to reduce the level of noise. The radiographer will speak to you in between each set of pictures and you will be able to communicate with them via the intercom within the scanner or the emergency buzzer if necessary. All you have to do during the scan is to lie back, relax and keep as still as possible.

HOW LONG WILL I BE IN THE SCANNER?

The scan itself may take anything from 20 minutes to an hour (or possibly even longer depending on the exact examination performed - the radiographer will give you a better idea of this when you attend for the scan)

DOES IT HURT?

The scan itself does not hurt, although occasionally it is necessary for you to have a small injection in your arm of a harmless “dye” (contrast agent) called Gadolinium either before or during the scan.

WILL I FEEL ANY AFTER EFFECTS?

You should not notice anything at all after either the scan or the gadolinium injection and will be safe to continue as normal.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE RESULTS?

The MRI scan will be reported by the Consultant Radiologist and the report and MRI images will be forwarded to the doctor who has referred you for the scan.



Any other questions?

Please call us on 0207 908 2011

HCA

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