

# Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)



## MRI Scan Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)

You have been referred for an MRI investigation to help in the clinical management of your care. MRI is one of the most advanced imaging techniques developed to date.

MRI uses a very strong magnetic field and radio waves to produce detailed images of the body's internal structures. This information will help you prepare for the examination, so please read it carefully.

### Safety

MRI is a very safe method of imaging with no known side effects. However, due to the very strong magnet needed, it is not safe for some patients that may have implanted devices for example.

If you have, or suffer from, any of the following please contact the Imaging Centre at least 3 working days before your examination.

#### Do you have any metallic implants within your body such as:

- Artificial Heart Valves or a Cardiac Pacemaker
- Cerebral aneurysm clips (sometimes used during brain surgery)
- Any medical devices or stimulators
- Stents

#### Can you lie flat comfortably?

Do you suffer from claustrophobia? If so, then please see your GP or contact the department for options available prior to your appointment.

### Pregnancy

Whilst MRI is certainly safer than most other imaging techniques (because it does not use X-Rays) it is still not recommended during pregnancy. If you are or think that you may be pregnant please call the department straight away.

### Preparing for your MRI examination

On the day of your examination, you may eat, drink, and take any prescribed medication as normal (unless otherwise instructed). It will be necessary to reconfirm the safety questions prior to undertaking your examination.

On arrival you will be greeted by a Radiographer. You will be asked to remove any metal objects including hairpins, glasses, wigs, non-permanent dentures and jewellery (but not plain gold wedding bands). If possible it is best to leave any valuables at home. Watches and credit cards will be damaged by the magnetic field and must be removed.

You may be asked to get changed into a gown. Female patients may also have to remove bras. A locker is provided for your belongings.

In general if your clothing does not contain any metal fastenings then you may not have to get changed.

### The MRI examination

You will be taken to the scanner where the full procedure will be explained.

You will be asked to lie down on the examination couch and made comfortable. It is important that you are comfortable as you must lie perfectly still for the duration of the examination. Patient movement is the biggest single cause of an unsuccessful scan.

The couch will then be positioned into the centre of the magnet. Once you are in position, nothing else will move or touch you.

We require nothing more from you other than asking you to remain as still as possible depending on the scan, you may be asked to hold your breath for a short period of time.

The examination will usually take between 15 to 45 minutes depending on the area being scanned and the requested requirements received from the Consultant Radiologist. However, do not be alarmed if your examination takes a little longer. It is sometimes necessary to supplement your examination by the injection of an 'MRI dye'.

We would discuss this with you before proceeding. This will help show up some structures more clearly. The injection should not affect you or your ability to drive home in any way.

### Noise

The MRI examination is quite noisy and you will be given ear protection to reduce the level of discomfort caused by this noise. Some scanners allow a CD or radio to be played. You are welcome to bring in a favourite CD to listen to but this may not always be possible or appropriate.

### Your scan results

Once the MRI scan is over, the images will be reported on and the results sent to the Doctor who requested it. The results will not be available instantly, but once received, the Doctor will be able to discuss them with you and discuss any questions you may have.

Please ensure that you follow up with your referring Doctor to make sure that you get the results.

### If you have any further questions

Do not hesitate to contact the Imaging Department where a member of staff will help to answer any questions.

We can, if necessary, arrange for you to visit the unit before your scan date.