



Having an MRI

What is an MRI?

An MRI scanner is a large tube that is open at both ends, you will lie inside the tube during the scan. Our MRI scanners are short and wide bore models so much more comfortable than some.

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) is a type of scan that uses strong magnetic fields and radio waves to produce detailed images of the inside of the body. This causes magnetic realignment of atoms and molecules within the body. Computer processing can recognise the changes in the atoms as typical of organs and other structures within the body, building up a picture of normal parts of your body and those affected by disease.

- There is no need for any special preparation prior to your examination, you may continue with any medication and there are no dietary restrictions
- You may wish to leave your jewellery at home for safe keeping, items will have to be removed prior to your scan

Important note

Due to the strong magnetic field some people may not be able to have a MRI scan. You will be sent a safety questionnaire with your appointment letter. It is very important to complete this questionnaire prior to your appointment. If you have any of the following implants, or if you answer **yes** to any of the questions you must contact us **before** your appointment.

- Heart pacemaker
- Artificial heart valve
- Metal fragments in the eye, head or body
- Aneurysm clips (these are metal clips inserted during some operations, especially of the blood vessels in the brain)

- Blood vessel stents

Having something metallic in your body doesn't necessarily mean you can't have an MRI scan, but it's important for Radiographer's carrying out the scan to be aware of it.

Arrival

- On arrival you will need to complete a safety questionnaire if you have not already done so.
- You may be asked to change into a gown, or if you prefer you may attend for your examination in clothes which do not contain metal, such as a track suit (without zips). We will provide a locker for your belongings.
- A radiographer will double check the safety questionnaire with you and explain the MRI procedure

What happens during the scan?

The MRI scanner is operated by a radiographer, who is trained in carrying out imaging investigations. They control the scanner using a computer, which is in a different room, to keep it away from the magnetic field generated by the scanner.

You'll be able to talk to the radiographer through an intercom and they'll be able to see you throughout the scan.

At certain times during the scan, the scanner will make loud tapping noises. This is the electric current in the scanner coils being turned on and off. The noise only lasts a few minutes. We will give you earplugs and headphones to reduce the noise and play some music for you to listen to.

The scan lasts 15 to 90 minutes, depending on the size of the area being scanned and how many images are taken. It's very important to keep as still as possible during your MRI scan.

On some occasions it is necessary for you



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have an injection of a contrast agent (dye) to get additional information from the scan. If this is necessary, then the radiographer will explain this to you before proceeding

What happens next?

Once your examination is complete you will be able to go home or back to work. A consultant radiologist will review the scan and issue a report. The images and results will be forwarded to the medical professional in charge of your care. They will send you an appointment to discuss the results of the scan

Known risks

Sound dangerous? There are currently no known risks associated with having a MRI scan. There have been no reports of harm to patients from MRI for over more than 20 years of use in medicine. MRI does not use any X-rays so it can be used as often as need be. The noise that the MRI scanner produces is fairly loud, but it is within the safety guidelines recommended. MRI is considered to be a very safe way of producing images that can diagnose many medical conditions.

Lastly - relax

Don't worry about your scan. We are here to help. If you have any fears or doubts, don't hesitate to talk to one of our staff. If you would like to visit the department before your scan to have a look around, please contact us.

Dignity and respect

It is expected that staff, patients and visitors will treat each other with dignity and respect. The hospital operates a zero tolerance policy towards acts of physical or verbal aggression and action, including prosecution where appropriate, will be taken if such behaviour is displayed.

Car parking

Patients and visitor parking is available at gate

A and C, the main visitor car park is located in gate C, close to the Outpatients Department. The hospital operates a pay and display system.

For more information visit roh.nhs.uk.

If you are unable to keep your appointment it is important that you let us know as soon as you can. Failure to inform us may mean that you will not be sent a further appointment in the future.

Telephone: 0121 685 4135

www.roh.nhs.uk

