

MRI Scan (Magnetic Resonance Imaging)

Introduction

This leaflet tells you about having an MRI scan. It explains what is involved and what the possible risks are.

A radiographer who is highly trained will perform your scan and it will then be interpreted by a specially trained doctor called a radiologist.

What is MRI?

MRI stands for Magnetic Resonance Imaging. It is a way to look inside the body without using x-rays. MRI can produce two or three dimensional images of what is going on inside a patient's body. This information may help your consultant or doctor with diagnosis and planning of any treatment.

It uses:

- A large magnet (large enough to surround the patient, but is open at both ends)
- Radio waves
- A computer

Who will be present for the scan?

Radiographers and radiographic assistants will be present in the room to prepare you for the scan; they will introduce themselves at the start of the scan.

Occasionally student radiographers may be present to observe the scan.

Is there any preparation needed before my scan?

At home:

- Just relax and go about your normal routine.
- Follow any instructions about eating or taking your usual prescribed medication.
- Bring something to read or do while you wait for your scan.
- Leave magnetised credit or bank cards at home as they may be affected if accidentally taken into the scan room.

At the scanning site:

- You will be asked about your medical history, especially whether you have a pacemaker or any metallic objects or implants inside your body. Some implants are contraindicated for MRI. Please contact the department if you have a pacemaker, or any cardiac (heart) implant or repair, a gastric band, a cerebral aneurysm clip in place following brain surgery, an inner ear - implant or a muscular or neuro stimulator implant. If you have any of the above or have history of metallic foreign body in the eye please contact the department for further instructions prior to your appointment. **Failure to do this may mean that we have to postpone your scan.**
- You will be asked to remove any metallic objects such as; jewellery, body piercing, hairpins, glasses, wig or hair extensions (if it has metal clips), hearing aids and non-permanent dentures.

- If you have had an operation in the past 6 weeks, please contact us on **01392 402336**, **selecting option one, option five** as soon as possible.
- You may be asked to change into a hospital gown.

Cancelling your appointment

If you are unable to attend your appointment, we would be grateful if you could contact us on **01392 402336 selecting option one, option five** as soon as possible. We can then offer your original appointment to another patient. A further date and time will then be arranged for you. Please be advised that if you fail to attend your appointment, it may be necessary to remove you from the radiology waiting list.

Please note: If you have had D&V (diarrhoea and vomiting) you will need to contact us to rebook your appointment unless you have been clear for the past 48 hours.

What happens during the scan?

The equipment may look intimidating, but there is no need to be frightened. It is important to stay still and relaxed. The radiographer can address any questions or concerns that you may have.

- You will be asked to complete a safety checklist before entering the scan room.
- You will then be taken into the room and positioned comfortably in the scanner, normally with your arms by your side. You will be asked to keep still during the scan. The area to be scanned will be positioned within the machine.
- Your whole body may be in the machine but you will not be totally enclosed and will be able to communicate with the radiographer either through an intercom or alarm bell. The scan will then be taken.
- You will hear loud banging noises during the scan and will be given headphones for ear protection to minimise this. We can play the radio or a CD if you wish to bring one, through the headphones.

- The scan may need an injection into a vein in your arm of a contrast dye or substance that improves the picture of certain tissues or blood vessels. This may be done at the beginning or during the scan.
- The radiographer will leave the room during the scan, but will be able to talk to you through an intercom.

Will it hurt?

An MRI scan is a painless procedure.

How long will it take?

The length of the examination will vary depending on which area is being looked at. Total scan time usually ranges from 20 to 60 minutes. There will be several short scans and you will have communication with the Radiographer during the scan.

You can expect to be in the Medical Imaging Department for up to one and a half hours. Many examinations are however completed sooner than this.

What happens after the scan?

You should feel well enough to go home or back to work after the examination. A radiologist will report on the scan images.

Are there any risks or complications?

Pregnant women should contact the department for further instructions before their appointment. Be sure to tell your doctor if you think there is a chance you may be pregnant.

The contrast dye used in MRI scans contains gadolinium. Prior to IV contrast being given you will be asked if you have any known allergies or kidney problems. If you are breast feeding please inform the radiographer prior to the contrast.

For some examinations you may be given an injection of buscopan. This may rarely precipitate acute glaucoma. If you develop a painful eye, you should attend A&E immediately.

Finally

If you find reading this leaflet difficult or you do not understand what it means for you, please call **01392 402336**, selecting **option one, then option five** and we can talk it through or alternatively you can email us rde-tr.RadiologyAppointments@nhs.net

More information and how to get here

For more information on the department and how to get to the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital at Wonford please refer to the enclosed "Welcome to the Medical Imaging Department" leaflet or use the Trusts website for the latest information:

www.rdehospital.nhs.uk/patients/where

For more information on the Medical Imaging Department please visit our website:

www.rdehospital.nhs.uk/patients/services/medical-imaging

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