

Having an MRI scan

Radiology Department (MRI)
Tel: 01271 349183

Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please contact the PALS desk on 01271 314090 or at rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net.

What is an MRI scan?

This type of scan, known as MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging), creates images of the body, using a powerful magnetic field and radio waves.

Why is it needed?

Your doctor should have explained to you why an MRI scan is needed. If not, do please ask.

What does it involve?

The scanner is a large magnet that has a hole through the middle. You will be asked to lie on a scanner table, as still as possible to help us get the best images. You will be positioned either head first or feet first, depending on the area being scanned.

When the scanner is working it makes a loud drumming noise. To reduce the noise, you will be given some earplugs and headphones to wear. We are able to play music through the headphones and this may help you relax, so please feel free to bring a CD, MP3 player or phone with you.

In some cases, an injection of a "dye" or contrast medium is given in a vein (normally in the elbow) to enhance the images.

Please note: MRI scanning may not be suitable for some people. Please read carefully the section on the next page, '**Are there any risks?**'.

How long will it take?

Scanning one area of the body takes 15 -30 minutes. It could be longer if your doctor has asked for more than one area to be scanned, or if the scan is complex.

If the injection of a "dye" or contrast medium is needed, this will require patients to remain in the radiology department for up to 1 hour afterwards.

Where is it done?

Please check your appointment letter for information and directions.

What preparations are needed?

Prior to having your scan, it will be necessary for you to fill in a safety questionnaire. If required, please bring your reading glasses.

Due to the strong magnetic field, metal items cannot be taken into the scan room. You will need to remove any jewellery, particularly body piercings (it is not usually necessary to remove wedding rings) and empty your pockets. Lockers are provided, though you may prefer to leave valuables, such as jewellery, at home. We also recommend that you do not wear heavy eye make-up as this can affect the quality of some scans.

For some scans you may be asked to change into a gown. However, if you prefer, you may attend in your own clothes providing they are metal free, with no clips, zips, belt buckles etc.

Please follow carefully any other preparation instructions given in your appointment letter.

How will I feel during the test?

Apart from the loud noise, you should feel nothing during the scan. However, some people may find it a little claustrophobic.

How will I feel afterwards?

You should have no after-effects from the scan.

Are there any risks?

MRI scanning is one of the safest ways of examining the body; it does not use x-rays and has not been shown to have any harmful side-effects. However, MRI scanning may not be suitable for some patients.

Important safety information

It is **essential** that you inform us **before** you attend for your scan if you:

- have a heart pacemaker, loop recorder, defibrillator, artificial heart valve or other metallic implant
- have **ever** had any metal fragments in your eye
- had surgery on your head, have any surgical/aneurysm clips in your head or a programmable hydrocephalus shunt
- had surgery on your eyes or ears
- are, or think you may be, pregnant

- **had surgery in the past eight weeks or a recent endoscopy procedure**
- **have a dental brace fitted**
- **have a libre sensor or other diabetes monitor**
- **have any mobility issues**

If you have answered yes to any of the above, please call the MRI department on 01271 349183.

Follow-up

The results of your MRI scan will be sent to the referring doctor who will arrange a follow-up appointment.

Further information

If you are unable to attend for your scan or have any questions about your scan, please contact the MRI department on 01271 349183, to re arrange your appointment.

If you fail to attend your appointment, your scan will be cancelled and your referring clinician will be informed.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

Have your say

Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

Tell us about your experience of our services. Share your feedback on the Care Opinion website www.careopinion.org.uk.

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