

About your child's MRI scan under general anaesthetic

(Morning appointments)

Other formats

If you need this leaflet in another format such as Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service:

- 01392 402093 (for Mid Devon, East Devon and Exeter services)
- 01271 314090 (for North Devon services)
- rduh.pals@nhs.net

What is an MRI scan?

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 the patient's body. For good quality pictures the person must lie absolutely still, so young children usually need to be 'put to sleep' with a general anaesthetic

It uses:

- a large magnet (large enough to surround the patient)
- radio waves
- a computer.

Reasons for having an MRI scan

The doctor who requests your child's MRI scan will discuss with you the reasons for the scan. They will explain the information they hope to find, and how this will influence your child's subsequent management. In addition, they will explain why the MRI needs to be done now, rather than waiting until your child is old enough to undergo an MRI without a general anaesthetic. They will also discuss why alternative investigations, which would not require a general anaesthetic, would not be appropriate.

Additional investigations under the same general anaesthetic

If anything else, such as a blood test needs to be done, the doctor will discuss this with you.

Information about the diagnosis

This will be discussed with you by your child's paediatrician.

What does the procedure involve?

The procedure will involve your child keeping completely still inside the scanner (this is why a general anaesthetic is given) while pictures are taken. An injection may be given into a vein to make some parts of the body show up better.

The general anaesthetic is described in more detail in the leaflet entitled 'Your Child's General Anaesthetic', which is available from Bramble and Caroline Thorpe wards.

What happens before the scan?

Your child should not eat after midnight on the night before the MRI scan. Please encourage your child to drink clear, non-fizzy drinks (e.g. water or squash, **but NOT milk**) until they arrive at the hospital on the day of the scan. If your child is less than one year old they can have a breast feed until 6am or formula feed which must be finished by 5am. They will be admitted to Bramble or Caroline Thorpe ward on the day of the scan, and encouraged to drink water or squash on the ward. If your child is taking any medicines or inhalers, they should take these as usual on the day of the scan.

We expect your child to make a rapid recovery after their MRI scan under general anaesthetic and to experience no serious problems. However, it is important that you know about minor problems, which are common after this procedure, and also about more serious problems that can occasionally occur. The next section '*The risks of a general anaesthetic*' describes these, and we ask you to read this. The headings from this section will also be included in the consent form you will be asked to sign before your child's MRI.

What is a general anaesthetic?

A general anaesthetic ensures that your child is unconscious and free of pain during an investigation or operation.

Anaesthetists are specialist doctors who are responsible for the wellbeing of your child throughout the procedure.

The risks of a general anaesthetic

General anaesthetics are usually very safe. However, there are some risks, which may be increased if your child has a chronic medical condition. The risks are outlined in the infographic overleaf.

There are leaflets and videos of what it is like to go into hospital and have an anaesthetic, as well as further information at: rcoa.ac.uk/childrensinfo,

How long does a scan take?

Total scanning time is approximately one hour.

What happens after the scan?

Your child should recover quickly, and should not experience any pain or discomfort.

Most children will go to the recovery room. Each child is cared for by a specialist nurse until he or she is awake and is ready to go back to the ward. Usually a ward nurse will bring you to the recovery room as soon as your child wakes up.

Some children are very distressed when they wake from the anaesthetic. This is common in children under three years and sometimes in children who are upset before they are anaesthetised. It is not related to pain. Your child may take a little while to calm down, but usually will settle after returning to the ward, having food and drink, and playing with their toys or watching TV.

Discharge from hospital?

You can take your child home a few hours after the MRI scan, on the same day, as long as they can drink and are not being sick.

What should you do if a problem develops?

If you have any concerns before you take your child home, please talk to the nurse looking after them.

Do you need to return to hospital for a check and what will happen to the results?

No, you do not need to return to the hospital for a check but you will be seen in the outpatient department to discuss the results of the scan.

Who should you contact in an emergency?

Bramble Blue Ward on Exeter (01392) 402681.

Caroline Thorpe Ward in North Devon (01271 322704)

How to get to your appointment

Please refer to the enclosed “Welcome to the medical imaging department” leaflet or use the Trusts website for the latest information:
<https://www.royaldevon.nhs.uk/our-sites/>,

For more information on the medical imaging department in Exeter, please visit our website:
<https://www.royaldevon.nhs.uk/services/medical-imaging-radiology-x-ray/medical-imaging-eastern-services/>.

For more information on the medical imaging department in North Devon, please visit this website page:
<https://www.royaldevon.nhs.uk/services/medical-imaging-radiology-x-ray/radiology-northern-services/>.



Common events and risks for children and young people having a general anaesthetic

This summary card shows some of the common events and risks that healthy children and young people of normal weight face when having a general anaesthetic (GA) for routine surgery (specialist operations may carry different risks).

Modern anaesthetics are very safe. There are some common side effects which are usually not serious or long lasting. Risk will vary between individuals, and will depend on the procedure and the anaesthetic technique used. Your anaesthetist will discuss with you the risks they believe to be most significant. You should also discuss with them anything you feel is important to you.

Very common

More than 1 in 10
Equivalent to one person in your family



Sore throat



Agitation on waking from GA
Mainly ages 1-6 years



Sickness



Temporary changes in behaviour
eg. anxiety, sleep problems, bedwetting

Common

Between 1 in 10 and 1 in 100
Equivalent to one person in a street



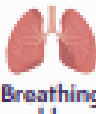
Minor lip or tongue injury



Discomfort at injection site

Uncommon

Between 1 in 100 and 1 in 1,000
Equivalent to one person in a village



Breathing problems
Needing treatment



Skin damage
Mainly longer procedures

More information

Our website has more on these risks as well as short videos to help children prepare for surgery.



Scan to find out more:



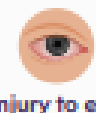
rcoa.ac.uk/childrensinfo

Rare

Between 1 in 1,000 and 1 in 10,000
Equivalent to one person in a small town



Need for Intensive Care (unplanned)
1 in 2,400
Risk is higher for children under 1 year



Injury to eye
eg. scratch on eye



Damage to teeth

Very Rare

1 in 10,000 to 1 in 100,000 or more
Equivalent to one person in a large town



Anaphylaxis
1 in 40,000
Severe allergic reaction to a drug



Awareness during an anaesthetic
1 in 60,000



Death as a direct result of anaesthesia
1 in 100,000 to 1 in a million



Long-term disability
Less than 1 in 100,000

Things we all do in normal life, such as road travel, involve higher risks than the **Very Rare** risks above.



Leave your feedback on this resource at: surveyMonkey.co.uk/r/testrisk or by scanning this QR code:

Churchill House, 35 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4SG | patientinformation@rcoa.ac.uk | March 2022

Your notes

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, please contact PALS:

- 01392 402093 (for Mid Devon, East Devon and Exeter services)
- 01271 314090 (for North Devon services)
- rduh.pals@nhs.net

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.

You can also share your feedback on the Care Opinion website at www.careopinion.org.uk or freephone 0800 122 3135.



Scan the QR code to visit the Care Opinion website →

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www.royaldevon.nhs.uk

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