

Having an MRI scan

Children's Ward

Patient Information Leaflet

Introduction

This leaflet is for people who are having an MRI scan. It tells you what the scan involves, the benefits and risks of having one and what happens next.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact a member of the Children's Ward.

What is an MRI scan?

An MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scan uses strong magnetic fields and radio waves to produce detailed images of the inside of the body.

The MRI scanner is a hollow machine with a tube running through its middle. During the scan, you will lie on a bed that slides into the tube (please see figure 1).



Figure 1 – an MRI scanner

What are the benefits of an MRI scan?

This type of scan gives much clearer images of the inside of your body than an X-ray, CAT scan or ultrasound may be able to give.

Your hospital doctor can use the scan to help diagnose your medical condition. MRI scans can be used to look at areas such as the brain, spinal cord, eyes, ears, heart, chest, lungs, stomach and bones.

How will I know when my scan is?

The MRI department will send you a letter with the date for the scan. When you receive your appointment, please let us know if you are going to come for the scan by following the instructions in the appointment letter.

Will I be put to sleep for the MRI scan?

No. Sometimes we give people a sedative medicine to help them relax before the scan but you will not be put to sleep.

Does it hurt?

No. It does not hurt and is very safe. The scanner is very noisy, and sometimes people do not like being enclosed inside the scanning machine, but it does not hurt.

What are the risks of having an MRI scan?

Doctors will check your health and medical history to make sure you can have the scan safely. For example, you cannot have an MRI scan if you have metal in your body, such as if you have metal pins in your body to help heal a broken bone.

There are no risks from the magnetic field or radio waves used for the scan – it does not use radiation.

Risks of the sedation

If you have sedation, there are a few risks but these are rare.

If you are in good health, it is possible that you may get a headache, feel dizzy or be sick after having sedation. Sickness only lasts a short time and we can give you medicine to help with this.

Risks of the contrast dye

Very occasionally we may have to give people an injection of contrast dye. This allows us to see things like blood vessels more clearly. If needed, the injection is given into a vein. It contains the rare earth metal gadolinium. It is very safe but occasionally there are some side effects. These are usually mild and do not last very long.

You may get a headache, feel sick, have a dry mouth and feel dizzy. Some people can have an allergic reaction but this is very rare. Please let the MRI staff know if you have ever had an allergic reaction to X-ray dye.

What happens before the MRI scan?

You will need to remove all metal objects such as glasses, jewellery, belts and hairclips before the scan. You do not need to worry about braces and fillings as these will not interfere with the scanner.

You will need to take off any clothing that has metal clips or buttons on it or change into a hospital gown. Do not take any electronic items such as mobile phones into the scanner room with you.

If you are having sedation, you will need to stop eating and drinking before the scan as it is safer for you:

- **Stop having milk and food the night before the scan.**
- **You can drink clear fluids such as water or squash until 6am on the morning of your scan.**
- **After 6am you must not have anything to eat or drink until after the scan.**

It is important that these instructions are followed or the scan may be delayed or even cancelled.

What happens on the day?

There can be up to four children booked for an MRI on the same morning as your scan. The scans usually take place in age order, from youngest to oldest, but the list can change on the day.

At first a nurse will fill in some paperwork and carry out basic tests such as your temperature, heart rate, oxygen levels and weight.

What if I am having contrast dye?

If you need to have a scan with a contrast dye, a nurse will have to put a cannula in so that the dye can go into your bloodstream. A cannula is a thin, plastic tube (please see figure 1).

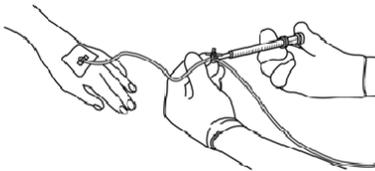


Figure 1 shows a cannula

What if I am having sedation?

A doctor will come and discuss any risks of sedation with you. They will use your weight to work out the dose of sedation. This is given as medicine by mouth.

The scan

A nurse will then take you down to the MRI department. Either your mum, dad or carer can go with you. You will have a monitor connected to you. This is so that a nurse can check your breathing during the scan.

The MRI scanner is run by a person called a radiographer from outside the room. The nurse will also be outside the room, and you will be able to see them through a window.

At times the scanner can be very noisy so we will give you some headphones to wear.

How long does the scan last?

The scan can last from 15 up to 90 minutes. Your mum, dad or carer can go into the room with you, if you want.

When can I go home?

You can go home straight away if you have not had sedation.

If you have had sedation, you can go home when you can drink clear fluids such as diluted squash or water and the nurse is happy that you have recovered.

When will I get the results?

You will not get the results on the same day as the images need to be analysed which takes some time. We will give your results at your next hospital appointment.

What should I do at home?

There are no special instructions to follow if you have not had sedation. You can carry on as normal and go to school.

However if you have had sedation, you may be more sleepy than usual for 24 hours after the scan. You will need to follow this advice:

- Make sure that you can drink clear fluids such as diluted squash or water before eating anything. It is a good idea to wait about 20 to 30 minutes after the drink before eating any food.
- If you feel sick or you are sick, do not have milk. Just have clear fluids such as water or squash and wait about 30 minutes to one hour. Once you feel well, try eating your usual food and drinks.
- If you take any medications, take these as normal.
- You should be well enough to go to school the day after the scan.

Can I find out more?

You can find out more from the following web links:

NHS Choices

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/MRI-scan/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Children's Ward on 01384 244271

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/c2-childrens-ward/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email patient.information@dgh.nhs.uk

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

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此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ، ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, 0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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