

Information for patients

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scans



Radiology

What is a Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scan?

A Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scan produces detailed images of inside of the body. Images are produced by the MRI scanner using strong magnetic fields and radio frequency waves.

What is the procedure?

We will ask you to change into some cotton clothing before your scan. You may wish to bring a dressing gown to wear while you are waiting. A radiographer will then escort you into the exam room. They will position you on the couch, explain the scan to you and ensure you are comfortable, before starting the scan.

During the scan you will hear loud knocking noises, these are a normal part of the scan and are due to an electric current in the scanner being turned on and off very quickly. MRI scans can take between 20 and 90 minutes. It is very important to keep as still as possible during the scan. To help pass the time during the scan, we can play you music. You are welcome to bring a CD of your choice. If not, you choose one of the available DAB radio stations.

Depending on the scan, we may need to inject you with a contrast agent. This makes certain tissues and blood vessels in the body show up more clearly. The Radiographer will explain this and ask questions to make sure it is safe to have the injection. If it is required, several scans will be taken before the injection. These scans are then repeated straight after. It is important you stay still between these scans.

We cannot foresee emergencies, so please be patient if your scan does not take place on time. Please ask at reception if there are any delays.

What are the benefits of the procedure?

An MRI scan can be used to look at almost any part of the body. The results of an MRI scan can be used to diagnose conditions, plan future treatment, check on known conditions, and to see how effective previous treatment has been.

What are the risks of the procedure?

An MRI scan is safe and painless. You may find it difficult if you have claustrophobia (a person with a fear of confined spaces), so please let us know

as we can support you with this. No evidence has been found to suggest any risk to the human body from the magnetic field or radio waves used during the scan. However, for patients with certain implants, these can pose a hazard. In these cases, we may suggest different imaging.

The radiographer will make sure you are safe to have the scan. We can always see you, so we can keep an eye on you during the scan. We can also speak with you through an intercom if needed. You will be provided with a call bell throughout the scan, should you need urgent help.

An injection of contrast agent can cause side effects such as feeling of sickness, a skin rash, a headache, or dizziness. It is important you tell the radiographer if you have a history of allergic reactions or any kidney disease.

How do I prepare for the procedure?

We will send out a safety form along with your appointment letter. Please fill this in carefully and contact us if you have any concerns.

Please let us know if you have any of the following by calling the Radiology department:

Cardiac Pacemaker, any metal clips inside your head, cochlear implants, diabetic sensor or any **metal fragments** either in your eyes or in any other part of your body as it may not be safe for you to have an MRI scan in our department.

Pregnant patients are also not normally scanned, unless it is in emergency.

Please let us know if there is any possibility of pregnancy.

You can eat, drink, and take your usual medications. If you wear a medication patch, you will be asked to remove and dispose of this for the duration of the scan. Please make sure you bring a replacement with you to reapply after the scan.

What happens after the procedure?

A Consultant Radiologist is a specialist doctor who interprets medical images. They will write a report on your images from the MRI scan. A copy of this report will then be sent to your referring clinician. The Radiographer can advise you on how long this may take.

Who can I contact if I have any questions?

For any questions relating to the scan or completing the safety form contact the Radiology department on: **01691 404316**

IMPORTANT

Please contact the department as soon as possible if you have any of the following:

- Cardiac pacemaker/defibrillator
- Aneurysm clips
- Cochlear implants
- History of metal fragments in your eyes
- Spinal implants
- Any chance you may be pregnant
- Diabetic sensor

If you cannot keep this appointment, please call as soon as possible to let the MRI department know on, MRI bookings: **01691 404021** or MRI reception: **01691 404316**

If you require a special edition of this leaflet

This leaflet is available in large print. Arrangements can also be made on request for it to be explained in your preferred language. Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) email: rjah.pals.office@nhs.net

Feedback

Tell us what you think of our patient information leaflet. Please send your comments to the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) email: rjah.pals.office@nhs.net

Date of publication: April 2026
Date of review: April 2029
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