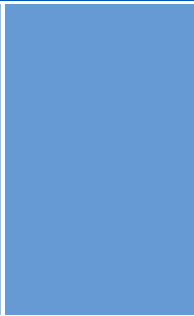


Having a Magnetic Resonance Scan (MRI) at the James Paget University Hospital



[Information for Patients / Carers](#)

Your doctor has asked for you to have a magnetic resonance (MRI) scan. The MRI scanner is part of the Diagnostic Imaging Department. This leaflet tells you more about the scan. Details of your appointment should be in the accompanying letter.

The department can be contacted by phone on 01493 453260 between 09:00 and 16.30, Monday to Friday. An answerphone is available out of hours.

What is an MRI?

MRI uses magnetic fields and radio waves to build up pictures of the body. The pictures are very detailed and can show both bones and soft tissues in the body and can therefore give a great deal of information.

Are there any risks?

As far as is known at present, this is an extremely safe procedure with no side effects. The scanner uses a very powerful magnet and radio waves to obtain the pictures. There are people who will be unable to have an MRI scan due to metal from injuries or previous surgery. Examples of this are:

- If you have had a history of metal fragments in your eyes (for example welding or grinding injuries), it may be necessary to have an ordinary X-ray done to prove there are no bits left.
- If you have a pacemaker or other electronic implants.
- If you have a metallic clip on an artery from a previous brain operation.

Please contact us if you think any of the above apply to you.

The vast majority of metal implants, shrapnel or metal sutures (stitches) that have been in place for a long time will not be a problem.

If you are or might be pregnant please let the scanning department know as soon as possible. MRI scans may not be advisable in early pregnancy.

Can I eat and drink normally before the scan?

For the majority of examinations, there are no special preparations. You can eat, drink and take medication as normal before the scan unless you have been told otherwise on your appointment sheet.

When you arrive

On arrival you will be asked to read and fill in a questionnaire about your health and medical history and to sign a consent form.

It is advisable to wear clothes without metal fastenings; alternatively you may be asked to change into a gown. You will be asked to remove all jewellery and piercings, except for a plain wedding band.

Watches, keys, money and credit cards will also have to be removed and left outside the scanner room.

What happens during the scan?

You will be taken into the MRI room and positioned on the scanner couch.

The couch will be moved slowly into position so your body is within the scanner. The scanner is open at both ends and is well lit. You will be asked to remain still. The staff will operate the scanner from the control room but you will be able to talk to them via an intercom and they will be watching you all the time during the scan.

The machine is very noisy and you will be given ear plugs and/or earphones to reduce this. You may wish to bring a music CD to listen to whilst in the scanner.

You may be given an injection during the scan, usually in a vein in your arm. Contrast medium (the liquid that is injected) helps to produce a more detailed image. This will be discussed with you beforehand. As with all medication, a very small number of people will be allergic to this. For some pelvic scans an injection of a muscle relaxant is also required. This will slow down the movement of the gut for about 20 minutes so that the images are not blurred.

Will it be uncomfortable?

Apart from machine noise you will not be aware of anything happening. A few patients find the scanner claustrophobic. If this makes you feel worried please tell the radiographer straight away. If you are very concerned you may wish to come and view the scanner before your appointment. Some people find this helpful to reduce their fears.

How long will it take?

The scanning process is generally between 20 and 45 minutes. However some scans of the abdomen and pelvis can take 75 minutes. You also need to allow 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire before the scan.

What happens after the scan?

You are free to go once the scan is complete. If you have been given a muscle relaxant you will just need to make sure that your vision is not impaired before driving or operating machinery for up to one hour afterwards.

When will you get the results?

Afterwards, a report will be issued by a Consultant Radiologist. This report will be sent to the doctor who referred you for the scan. In most cases they will have the results within a week. If you don't already have a follow-up appointment, then it may be a couple of weeks before you hear anything. If you have any problems or concerns, please speak to the referring doctor's secretary via switchboard.



The hospital is able to arrange for an interpreter to assist you in communicating effectively with staff during your stay through INTRAN.

If you need an interpreter or a person to sign, please let us know.

**If you require a large print version of this booklet, please contact PALS on
01493 453240**