

MRI Patient Information

Having an MRI at the James Paget Hospital



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MRI Out-patient Information

This leaflet contains important information about your MRI scan. It is important that you take the time to read it.

For more information, please contact the CT & MR department. Telephone: (01493) 453260

What is an MRI scan?

A Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scanner uses strong magnetic fields and radio waves to build up pictures of the body. The pictures are very detailed and can show bones and soft tissues and can therefore give a great deal of information.

Are there any risks with MRI?

As far as is known, MRI is an extremely safe procedure with no side effects, but there are some people who may not be able to have an MRI because of the strong magnetic fields surrounding the scanner. **Please carefully read the following precautions and contact us on 01493 453260 if you think any of the statements below apply to you, or if you have been told you must not have an MRI:**

- If you have ever had a penetrating eye injury from metal fragments it may be necessary to have an x-ray of your eyes to prove there is no metal remaining.
- If you have any implants which are electronic or magnetically adjustable, e.g. a pacemaker or a programmable shunt.
- If you have a metallic clip on an artery in your brain, MRI may be unsafe for you.
- If you have a stent in any of your arteries, other than your heart, we would need to find out what sort of stent it is.

The majority of surgical implants can be scanned safely by meeting certain MRI scanning conditions. These implants are known as MRI 'conditional' implants. The same applies to most metal fragments from injuries if they are not in your eye.

If you are (or might be) pregnant, please contact us. There is no evidence to show that MRI is harmful in pregnancy but we prefer to know if you are. MRI would be much safer in pregnancy than some other types of scan.

Can I eat and drink normally before the scan?

For most examinations, there are no special preparations and you can eat, drink and take medications as normal.

However, for some MRI scans of your abdomen, food and drink can affect the pictures. For these, you will need to have no food or drink for a limited time before the examination. Your appointment letter will tell you if this applies to you.

When you arrive...

Your MRI may be booked within the CT/MR department, Northside MRI Unit, or on a mobile MRI facility so please check your appointment letter for directions. After checking in, a staff member will discuss the MRI safety questionnaire with you, this allows us to check that you do not have any implants which may be a problem in the scanner. If you have surgical implants and have been given a card with details of the make and model, please bring this with you.

- You may wish to wear clothing without any metal fastenings, metallic threads or silver 'antimicrobial' fibres as these can affect the pictures and could be dangerous in the scanner. We supply gowns for you to change into if your clothing is not suitable for wearing in the scanner.
- Any metal jewellery or piercings can be a problem in the MRI scanner. We strongly advise that you remove all jewellery, even if it is not in the area being scanned. A plain gold, silver, platinum or non-metallic wedding band can be left on for the scan.
- Metallic clips on hair extensions can be a problem, especially if you are having your head scanned. These will have to be removed prior to your scan.
- You should avoid wearing heavy makeup. Many types of makeup affect the pictures and some types can get hot in the scanner.
- Valuables such as watches, keys, money, credit cards and electronic devices will have to be left outside the scanner room so please consider leaving these items at home.

What happens during the scan?

You will be taken into the MRI room and positioned on the scanner table. Depending on the type of scan, you may have different types of pads (or "coils") positioned on or around your body. We will try to make you as comfortable as possible as it is important that you can keep still for the scan.

The machine is very noisy during the scan and it is important that we protect your hearing. We will normally use earplugs and/or special headphones for this, and you may be offered some music to listen to during the scan. We will not be able to hear you well whilst the scans are running, but we can see you. We will give you an emergency call bell for the duration of the scan so that you can alert us if you have any problems.

The couch will be moved slowly into position so that the part of your body being scanned is in the middle of the scanner, which is open at both ends and is well lit.

The MRI examination usually involves several scans of different lengths, between two and five minutes each. The radiographer will normally talk to you between each scan.

Apart from the noise, and possibly a slight vibration of the table, you will not be aware of anything happening.

Will I need an injection?

A radiologist (a specialist diagnostic imaging doctor) may ask that you have an injection during your MRI scan, this helps to produce a more detailed image. If this is required the radiographer will discuss this with you. Links to the Product Information Leaflets can be found in Further Information.

MRI contrast media (a clear liquid) may be injected (usually given via a cannula placed into a vein in your arm) and as with all medication, a very small number of people will be allergic to this. Mild reactions such as headache and nausea are uncommon (between 1 in 100 and 1 in 1000) and usually pass off quickly, and more severe reactions are rare or very rare (between 1 in 1000 and 1 in 10,000 or even less).

We would avoid giving you contrast if you are pregnant. If you are breastfeeding, a very small quantity of the contrast passes into a mother's milk. Although this is not considered to be a problem, some mothers prefer to stop breastfeeding for a period of 24 hours after having MRI contrast.

If you are on renal dialysis, please let us know as we prefer to book contrast MRI examinations just before you have dialysis where possible.

For some scans of the abdomen or pelvis, an injection of a smooth muscle relaxant may be required. This will slow down the gut for about 20 minutes so that the MRI pictures are less blurred. You may notice some mild effects from this such as a dry mouth, nausea and blurred vision. Such effects are common and affect 1 in 10 to 1 in 100 people. If your vision becomes blurred, you should not drive until this has worn off.

If you notice a delayed skin rash or facial swelling over the three to four days following the injection then please contact your GP, and also notify the MRI department.

Very occasionally during an injection, a small amount of the liquid leaks out of the vein into the surrounding tissue. This is called extravasation and can cause bruising, swelling and sometimes discomfort. In the unlikely event of this occurring, we will provide you with further instructions.

How long will it take?

The scanning process is generally between 20 and 45 minutes. However, there are some scans which can take up to 75 minutes. We also allow 15 minutes to complete and run through the safety questionnaire before the scan.

Please bear in mind that we do sometimes have to fit in emergencies so we may occasionally be running late.

What happens after the scan?

If we have given you an injection, you should remain in the department for 20 minutes afterwards. Otherwise, you can leave as soon as the scan is complete.

When will I get the results?

The results will not be available immediately. A radiologist will report on the scan and this will be sent to the doctor who requested it.

- Hospital doctors and outpatient clinics: If you have not been given information about a follow-up appointment after the scan then please wait to hear from the hospital doctor. If you have any further concerns or if the hospital has not made contact after a few weeks then please telephone the hospital and ask to speak to your hospital doctor's secretary.
- GPs: Results will normally only be sent to the surgery if the GP requested the scan. If the scan was requested by a GP then we suggest that you allow a few weeks before telephoning the surgery unless you have been informed otherwise by the GP.

Further information

Information about the medicines used in MRI can be accessed using the following links:

Buscopan® product information leaflet: <https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/files/pil.890.pdf>

Primovist™ product information leaflet:
<https://www.hpra.ie/img/uploaded/swedocuments/04b40830-a4f5-4e25-bbdf-616c9fb4b4e1.pdf>

Gadovist® product information leaflet: <https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/files/pil.2876.pdf>

Dotarem® product information leaflet:
<https://www.hpra.ie/img/uploaded/swedocuments/4823aca5-4267-41d0-99e4-12dbdddc7f38.pdf>

If you would like a printed copy of the manufacturers patient information leaflet please ask a member of staff.

Feedback

We want your visit to be as comfortable as possible. Please talk to the person in charge if you have any concerns. If the ward/ department staff are unable to resolve your concern, please ask for our Patient Advice and Liaison (PALS) information. Please be assured that raising a concern will not impact on your care. **Before you leave the hospital you will be asked to complete a Friends and Family Test feedback card.** Providing your feedback is vital in helping to transform NHS services and to support patient choice.

TRUST VALUES: We CARE for...
our patients... each other... ourselves

BEHAVIOURS:

Courtesy and respect

Attentively kind and helpful

Responsive communication

Effective and professional

**#Proud
of the
Paget**

 **IN TRAN**
communication for all

The hospital can arrange for an interpreter or person to sign to assist you in communicating effectively with staff during your stay. Please let us know.

For a large print version of this leaflet, contact PALS 01493 453240