

# Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) Information for Parents and Carers: Having an MRI scan under General Anaesthesia



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**The aim of this leaflet is to provide you with further information regarding your child's MRI scan which is being performed under general anaesthesia.**

## **What is an MRI scan?**

MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) creates high resolution images of the body on a computer using a powerful magnet and radio frequency waves. MRI is a very safe way of producing images that can diagnose medical conditions and produces more detailed pictures than an ordinary x-ray. It does not use x-rays and has not been shown to have any harmful side effects. The scan is carried out by radiographers specially trained in MRI.

The MRI scanner is an open ended tube. Your child will lie on a bed which then slides into the tube, with the part of the body which we are scanning at the centre. The scan should be completely painless.

## **Why does my child need to have General Anaesthesia?**

MRI scans can take anything from 15 minutes up to an hour or slightly longer in some cases. This is due to the level of detail that the MRI provides and requires the patient to lie very still for the duration of the scan. Some children can find this very difficult either because of their age or medical condition. In these cases it may be necessary for them to be given general anaesthesia to help them be still in order to obtain the best quality scan.

The decision to perform the scan in this way will be discussed with you by the referring Doctor and is made on an individual basis.

## **What happens on the day of the scan?**

You will need to bring your child to Ward 10 on the date and time stated on your appointment letter. This letter will also provide important information about when your child will need to stop eating and drinking.

Once booked into Ward 10, a member of the nursing team will greet you and ask some questions about your child's medical history. They will also check their temperature, pulse rate and blood pressure.

The doctor who will be administering the anaesthetic will visit you on Ward 10 to discuss this further.

Your child can bring a favourite toy or comforter. This can remain with them during the scan, providing it has no metal or mechanical parts.

During the anaesthetic process, a cannula will be inserted into a vein. A topical cream may be applied to your child's hands/arms on the ward prior to this. This works by numbing the skin to reduce the pain/discomfort your child may feel as the cannula is inserted. The nurse looking after your child will discuss this with you.

Around 20 minutes before their scan time, you and your child will be collected by the hospital porters and brought to the MRI department. A member of the MRI team will discuss the scan with you and

will need to check your child's MRI safety questionnaire. The consent form will be checked with the anaesthetist. Please do not hesitate to ask any questions you may have.

Your child will be given the anaesthetic in our anaesthetic area which is next to the MRI scanner. Once they are asleep, we will show you to the waiting room which you are very welcome to use whilst your child is being scanned. Your child will be transferred into the MRI scanner.

## What happens during the scan?

During the scan your child will be monitored at all times by the radiographer and the anaesthetic team.

The scanner is very noisy, so even though your child will be asleep they will have hearing defenders for the duration of the scan as these offer protection against the noise.

In **some** cases, a colourless contrast agent may need to be given as part of the MRI scan. This provides more detailed images and is given via an injection through a cannula (a small plastic tube) into your child's hand/arm. If required, this will be discussed with you.

## What happens after the scan?

Once the scan is completed, your child will be brought back into the anaesthetic area. The specialist team and the recovery nurses will continue to monitor and begin to wake your child up. A member of the MRI team will bring you to the bay as your child awakes.

When ready, you and your child will return to Ward 10 to continue recovery. Once fully recovered and your child has eaten and had a drink, they should be able to return home the same day.

The MRI images are studied by a specially trained radiologist and a report will be sent along to the doctor who referred your child for their scan. The referring doctor will contact you with the results or discuss them with you at the next follow-up appointment.

## Further information

Please complete the enclosed safety questionnaire for your child prior to your appointment. If you have any queries, please contact the CT/MRI appointments office.

If the appointment is inconvenient, please contact the CT/MRI appointments office as soon as possible.

**If you have any further questions please telephone the hospital on any of the numbers below:**

**CT/MRI Appointments Office: 01493 453260 (Monday to Friday, 8.30am – 5pm)**

**Ward 10 Childrens Ward: 01493 452010 (available 24 hours a day)**

### 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

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**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**