



UNDERSTANDING YOUR MRI EXAM

Your physician has referred you for a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) examination. After reading this information, you will better understand how to prepare for your exam, what it will be like, and when you can expect results.

WHAT IS MAGNETIC RESONANCE IMAGING (MRI/MRA):

Magnetic resonance imaging is a new medical technology that uses a strong magnetic field and radio waves to allow physicians to visualize certain anatomical structures more clearly than other modalities. The pictures produced by this new technology may help your doctor detect and define the differences between healthy and diseased tissue. Conditions that a few years ago might only have been detectable from physical signs and symptoms, now may be clearly seen. This will give doctors more time and better information to determine the most appropriate treatment.

An MRA exam is an exam that evaluates blood flow to a specific body region.

ON THE DAY OF THE EXAM:

Preparing for your MRI exam is relatively simple. You may eat and take any prescribed medication. If you are scheduled for an MRI of the kidneys, pancreas, gallbladder, adrenal, liver or an MRCP, please **do not eat or drink three hours prior to the exam.**

It is not recommended you undergo the examination if you have the following:

- Pacemaker or pacemaker wires
- Cerebral aneurysm clips
- Neurostimulators or bone stimulators
- Cochlear implants
- Gunshot/BB's, shrapnel
- If you are pregnant

There are also restrictions on what you can have with you during the exam. Since any metallic substance on your person can affect the quality of the diagnostic images, please do not bring any of the following into the examination room.

Coins

Jewelry (wedding rings are ok)

Watches

Keys

Hearing aids

Purses or wallets

Magnetic waves can erase credit card codes

*The MRI Center will provide you with a safe place for your belongings.

You may be asked to change into a patient gown, or wear comfortable clothes with no zippers or snaps.

(OVER)

THE MRI/MRA EXAMINATION:

The MRI machine may look intimidating because of its size, but there is no need to be frightened. Before the scan, the technologist will help you onto the examination table. You will be positioned comfortably, generally with your arms at your sides. The examination table will then slide into the magnet. The technologist will then step into the control area, while staying in constant contact with you both visually and through an intercom. If you need any assistance throughout the exam, all you have to do is ask.

As the exam proceeds, you will hear a thumping sound for several minutes at a time. Earplugs can be provided by the MRI technologist before the test begins. Relax and lie as still as possible. Other than the sound, the MRI/MRA creates no bodily sensation. The exam usually is completed within 45 minutes and often less. Any movement during this time will blur the picture and will extend the length of the exam. The images that have been taken will be reviewed for quality. When the quality is acceptable, you may get dressed and prepare to leave. You may resume your normal daily activities.

In some cases, the physician may decide to order a contrast agent. This contrast agent is a liquid that is injected into a vein in your arm. If an enhancement agent is needed during your MRI/MRA exam, it does not mean that your condition is more serious or that anything is wrong with you. You do not need to be concerned.

CAN I BRING SOMEONE TO THE MRI EXAM WITH ME?

Yes, one family member may accompany you into the exam room provided they meet the screening requirements. Otherwise, there is a waiting room for their convenience.

WHEN CAN YOU EXPECT RESULTS?

The images produced by the MRI machine will be reviewed by a Radiologist. A report will be sent to your physician within a few days of your exam. Your physician will then discuss the course of treatment with you based on your medical history, symptoms, Radiologist's report, and any other test result. If you need to take films from your exam to your next appointment, please call 24 hours in advance (814-877-6182).

IF YOU STILL HAVE QUESTIONS:

You should feel free to speak with your physician or the staff of the MRI center if you have additional questions. They will be happy to help you or members of your family to better understand the MRI exam.

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