

MRI Arthrogram

Information for Patients Having an MRI Scan

What is an MRI Scan?

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) is a painless and harmless examination. This type of scan uses a powerful magnetic field and radio-frequencies. It does not use X-rays. It is a technique that allows doctors to view very detailed cross-sectional images of the body part being examined, to help in the diagnosis and planning of any treatment.

Preparing for your MRI scan

When you receive your appointment letter it will include a safety questionnaire. Please follow the instructions carefully and bring the completed form to the MRI Department when you attend for your appointment. If possible, please do not wear any jewellery.

On the day of your scan we need to complete a more detailed MRI safety questionnaire to ensure your comfort and safety.

If you have been told by a doctor that you have renal impairment (reduced kidney function), please inform the radiographer when you arrive for your appointment.

This appointment will involve two procedures:

- The first procedure is an arthrogram under X-ray control in the main X-ray department, where X-ray and MRI contrast agent will be injected into the joint. (If you are aware that you are allergic to iodine, you must inform the radiographer before this procedure starts.)

- The second procedure is an MRI scan of the joint in the MRI department.

If you are having an arthrogram on a knee or wrist, you will also have another MRI scan **before** the injection of contrast agent.

What will happen when I arrive?

When you arrive for your appointment, the MRI radiographers will go through your safety questionnaire. You will then be asked to go the Main X-ray Department for the X-ray Arthrogram procedure.

For this, you will be appropriately dressed and then you will lie on a special X-ray table. The skin over the joint you are having imaged will be cleaned and sterilised. After numbing the skin with a small injection of local anaesthetic, a second very thin needle is inserted into the joint using X-ray guidance. Through this needle a small amount of X-ray and MRI contrast Agent (Gadolinium) is injected. The needle is then removed. Some X-ray images will be taken. This examination should take about 15-30 minutes.

You will then be escorted to the MRI unit for your MRI scan.

What happens during the MRI Scan?

You will then be asked to lie flat on the scanner table and equipment (coils) will be placed around the part of your body we are scanning. When we are taking the pictures, the scanner can be very noisy. It is important that you keep very still during the scan, as movement will reduce the quality of the images, which will mean that we may have to repeat the scans. Usually there are about 4 or 5 different scans, each lasting between 2-8 minutes, and you may be in the scanner for up to 40 minutes in total. You will be given earplugs or headphones to wear and you are welcome to bring a favourite CD to listen to.

Are there any risks?

MRI is generally a safe examination. However, because of the strong magnets involved, MRI must not be performed on people with certain metal implants in their bodies such as pacemakers, inner ear implants, surgical clips within the head and some artificial metallic heart valves. If you have ever had metal fragments in your eyes due to an injury, it will be necessary for you to have them X-rayed immediately before the MRI scan to ensure that no fragments still remain.

Some people may have a mild allergic reaction to the contrast injection (Gadolinium) and may develop a rash or possibly have a mild asthma attack. For this reason we ask patients to remain in the department for about one hour after the injection is given. The radiologist and radiographer are trained to recognise these reactions and to treat them.

What will happen after the scan?

- After your scan you may dress and go home. You must not drive as there will be local anaesthetic in the joint
- After leaving the department, you feel unwell or think you may have had an allergic reaction (rash/hives, swollen lips or difficulty breathing) please contact the MRI department or attend A&E
- You may feel some discomfort in the joint the next day as the anaesthetic wears off. If it is MORE than discomfort, seek advice from your GP, as very occasionally, infection of the joint may occur from this procedure

How will you get your results?

The results of your scan will be sent to the consultant, GP or clinic that requested your scan.