

MRI Breast

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 that may be necessary.

Preparing for your MRI scan

This scan must take place between days 5 and 10 of your menstrual cycle (Day 1 being the first day of your period). If the attached appointment is not between the relevant days please contact the MRI department to reschedule the appointment on 0151 604 7317.

Please note that if you arrive for an appointment where you have not checked the days against the menstrual cycle, so that you are **not** within days 5 to 10, we will be unable to perform the scan.

If you no longer have a menstrual cycle, the above is not applicable as the scan can be carried out at any time.

When you receive your appointment letter you will also receive 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.

What will happen when I arrive?

When you arrive for your appointment you will be asked to change into a gown. Before the scan, you will be asked to remove all jewellery and metal from your person, except gold wedding rings.

Your valuables should be left at home, on the ward or with a relative. You may also be asked to remove all eye make-up as this can interfere with scans of the head.

What happens during the MRI Scan?

You will be asked to lie on the scan table on your stomach. Your breasts will be positioned in a piece of equipment called a breast coil and you will be moved into the centre of the scanner. When we are taking the pictures, the scanner can be very noisy. It is important that you keep very still 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 45 minutes in total. You will be given earplugs or headphones to wear and you are welcome to bring a favourite CD to listen to.

Occasionally, an injection of MRI contrast medium (Gadolinium) may be given to enhance the quality of the images so body tissues can be seen more clearly. It is rare that anyone will feel anything other than the small needle that goes into your arm. We will do more scans after the injection.

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 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
- If you are given an injection of contrast medium (Gadolinium) you will need to stay in the hospital for one hour afterwards
- If, 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

How will you get your results?

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