

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)

Magnetic Resonance Imaging

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) is a painless way to look inside your body without using X-rays. MRI does not use radiation.

MRI uses a magnetic field to make three-dimensional (3-D) images of almost any part of your body. These images show the difference between normal tissue and abnormal tissue.

Depending on the type of MRI scan you will be having, you may need to have an intravenous (IV) contrast injection. The contrast will help certain areas in your body be seen better on the image.

The scan usually takes 45 to 90 minutes.

What To Tell Your Health Care Provider and Technologist

MRI is a safe exam but there are certain things that could interfere with it. Before your scheduled MRI, tell your health care provider and technologist if you:

- are pregnant or think you may be pregnant
- are afraid of closed-in spaces (claustrophobia). Your health care provider may give you a special medicine to help you relax before your scan. **If you do receive medicine, you will not be able to drive after your scan. Please arrange to have someone drive you home.**

Important: Tell your health care provider and technologist if you have:

- a brain aneurysm clip
- a Cochlear™ implant, implanted hearing aid or hearing aid
- an implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD)
- a pacemaker
- an electronic or magnetic device or implant
- an insulin pump
- an infusion pump or implanted drug infusion device
- an artificial joint (prosthesis) or implant
- an artificial or prosthetic limb
- any metal object inside or outside of your body, or have ever gotten metal in your eyes
- any other implanted device or foreign object in your body.

Any metallic object or substance could affect the quality of the images. It could also cause discomfort or injury when you are in the scanner.

An MRI can't happen until your health care provider and the MRI staff confirm you are safe for the MRI.

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Before the Scan

- If you are having a gallbladder, abdominal or pelvic MRI, do not eat or drink anything 4 hours before your scan.
- Take your regular medicines with a small sip of water the morning of your scan.
- You will change into a hospital gown and pants.
- You will need to remove:
 - body piercings
 - jewelry and watches
 - hairpins or barrettes
 - dentures
 - glasses
 - hearing aids
 - anything else that could be attracted to the magnet.
- You will be asked to fill out a safety checklist and answer questions about your medical history.
- The technologist will talk with you and tell you what to expect.

During the Scan

- The technologist will position you on a special table.
- The technologist will talk with you about when you will be able to hear and talk with him or her during the scan.
- The technologist will place earplugs or headphones on you.
- The table will slide into the scanner.
- The inside of the scanner is lighted and allows air to pass through for your comfort.

- Both ends of the scanner are open.
- You will need to relax and lie still during the scan. This will help the scanner take clear images. Any movement could cause blurry images.
- The scanner makes a fast thumping noise while it is taking images. This is normal.
- While the scanner is taking pictures, try to lie still and breathe normally and quietly.
- You may be asked to hold your breath.
- When the thumping noise stops, you need to continue to lie still.

After the Scan

- The table will slide out of the scanner.
- If your health care provider says you are able, drink up to four 8-ounce glasses of water for the next 8 hours to clear the contrast out of your system.
- Return to your normal activities, diet and medicines. Follow any instructions your technologist gives you.

Follow-up Results

- A cardiologist or radiologist will look at and interpret your scan.
- Your health care provider will receive the exam results. He or she will either talk with you about the results or mail you the results.