

Your MRI Scan in the X-ray Department

Radiology

Welcome to the Radiology Department

The Radiology department may also be called the X-ray or imaging department. It is the facility in the hospital where radiological examinations of patients are carried out using a range of X-ray equipment, such as a CT (computed tomography) scanner, an ultrasound machine, and a MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scanner.

Radiologists are doctors specially trained to interpret the images and carry out more complex examinations. They are supported by radiographers who are highly trained to carry out X-rays and other imaging procedures.

Your consultant or GP has requested you have an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scan. We hope the following information will answer questions that you may have about this examination.

What is a MRI scan?

MRI scanners produce cross-sectional pictures through any part of the body. The magnet is a circular tube open at both ends. The information from the scanner passes to a computer that produces a picture of your internal structure. The pictures are then displayed on a computer screen in the scanning control room.

Risks, alternatives and benefits

MRI does not involve the use of X-rays and is therefore considered safe. You are placed in a very powerful magnetic field.

However, it will not be possible to have a MRI scan if you have any of these:

- Cardiac pacemaker / defibrillator.
- Surgical clips in your head (particularly aneurysm clips).

- Some artificial heart valves.
- Metal fragments in your eyes.
- Electronic stimulators.
- Implanted pumps.

If you have a history of metal fragments in your eyes, you may need an X-ray to prove there are no fragments remaining. If you have a pacemaker, metal heart valves, or a metallic clip in your brain, there is a risk that these may be affected during an MRI scan, and a different examination will need to be arranged instead.

Please let the MRI unit know before your appointment if you have any of these.

The telephone number is on your appointment letter.

Before the scan you will be asked a series of questions to check that it is safe for you to enter the scan room. People with dental fillings and bridges, hip and knee replacements (if more than six weeks after operation), cardiac stents (if more than three months after operation) can all be scanned safely. The radiographers will need to know about these things to minimise the effect they have on your images. Please bring with you any information and documentation you have about surgery/implants.

Considerations

Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

If you are pregnant at the time of your scan appointment, please contact the department prior to your appointment or inform the radiographer before the scan. We avoid scanning during the first three months of pregnancy unless the diagnosis cannot wait and the only alternate test uses X-rays.

If you are breastfeeding we advise that you do not breastfeed for 24 hours after receiving the contrast injection as a safety precaution. It is also advised that you express and discard the breast milk during this time.

Claustrophobia

If you have experienced claustrophobia, or have trouble in enclosed spaces you may contact the MRI department before your appointment date to discuss. For mild claustrophobia, we find that we can help you to relax by talking you through the procedure.

Contrast injections

Most MRI tests do not need you to have an injection, but in some situations a contrast agent can greatly increase the information produced from the scan.

The contrast is injected into a vein. If the examination is an arthrogram then the injection will be into the joint space. MRI contrast is not the same as X-ray contrast. Very few people notice when it is injected.

Please let us know if you are diabetic, have any allergies, or kidney problems.

We may require you to attend for a blood test prior to your scan.

What happens during the MRI scan?

From reception you will be directed to the MRI waiting area. From here you will be taken to the MRI preparation room.

Please try to wear clothes without any metal zips or fastening since changing facilities are limited. For most examinations you will need to remove your trousers because of the metal zip. Bras also need to be removed because of the clips and underwire.

You will also have to remove any jewellery, piercings, your watch, phones, credit cards and coins (a safe space is provided in the MRI scanner area). It is not necessary to remove your wedding ring.

A small team which could include a radiographer, radiologist and a helper will care for you. The radiographer will carry out the scan.

They will assist you to lie down and make you comfortable. The couch top will then move you into the scanner.

The radiographer will leave the room before the scan begins, but we can see you at all times from the control room. You will also be provided with a buzzer that you can press at any time which will bring the radiographers immediately into the scan room.

The scanner will make a series of loud noises as the scans are being taken so you will be provided with ear defenders.

You will need to lie as still as possible when instructed by the radiographer. By keeping very still during the scan you can improve the quality of the images we obtain.

The scan will not be painful nor will you feel any discomfort. There are no side effects and you can continue as normal once you are informed that your examination is complete.



Children

Children under 16 can be accompanied at all stages of the examination by an appropriate adult. Everyone coming into the scan room will be asked the safety questions about metal and implants, and be expected to change into appropriate clothing if required.

Please be aware that there are no crèche facilities for the children of patients.

How long will it take?

You can expect to be in the MRI scanning room for anything from 20 minutes to 90 minutes. It takes 20 minutes for each area of your body that is being scanned i.e. 20 minutes if the brain is being scanned or 40 minutes if the brain and neck are being scanned.

While we will endeavour to ensure you are seen at your appointed time sometimes emergencies may have to take priority. We ask for your patience and understanding should this happen. If there is a delay you will be kept informed.

How will I get the results?

The results will not be available at the time of your scan. A radiologist will examine your scan in detail after your visit and prepare a written report to be sent out to the doctor who sent you for the scan. You will get the results from this doctor.

Can I bring a relative or friend?

Yes, but for reasons of safety they cannot accompany you into the MRI scanning room except in very special circumstances.

Questions

Please do not hesitate to ask questions either before or after your scan.

Contact Details:

Furness General Hospital X-Ray Department
Appointments : 01229 403557

Westmorland General Hospital X-Ray Department
Appointments: 01539 795276

Royal Lancaster Infirmary X-Ray Department
Appointments: 01524 511911

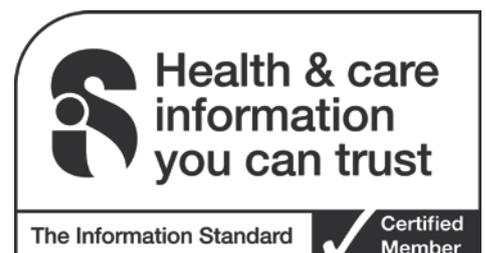
Other sources of information

Websites

For general information about radiology departments, visit the Royal College of Radiologists' website: www.goingfora.com

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Other formats

If you would like to receive this information in an alternative format, then please contact: 01539 715577.

Travelling to our hospitals

For the best way to plan your journey visit our website: <http://www.UHMB.nhs.uk/> or contact Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS): 01539 715577.

Useful Contact Details

NHS 111 (for 24 hour urgent health advice): telephone 111

Your Information

If you would like to know how we use, share, disclose and secure your information and your rights of access to the information we hold about you, visit the Trust's website: <http://www.UHMB.nhs.uk/> or contact Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01539 715577.

Evidence

Details of the evidence used in writing this leaflet are available on request from: Patient Information Officer at 01524 512476.

Feedback

We appreciate and encourage feedback. If you need advice or are concerned about any aspect of care or treatment, please speak to a member of staff or contact PALS on 01539 715577.

UHMBT is a no smoking Trust. Smoking is not permitted on any of the hospital sites. You can contact the NHS North Lancashire Stop Smoking services on the number below:

NHS Quit Squad - **0800 328 6297**

If you live in Cumbria, please call **0300 013 3000** to find a local pharmacy who are offers 1-2-1 support and nicotine replacement therapy.

University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay Trust: a great place to be cared for; a great place to work.