

# MRI Patient Information Leaflet



This leaflet provides information about your magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan, how to prepare for it and what is involved.

We have scanners across three hospital sites - University Hospital of Wales, Noah's Ark Children's Hospital for Wales and University Hospital of Llandough. Please ensure you have read your letter and attend the correct site.

## What is an MRI scan?

An MRI scanner uses a very strong magnetic field and radio waves to produce images of the body. These images can be used for diagnosing a large number of pathologies and used to plan treatments. MRI does not use ionising radiation like x-rays, and there are no known long-term health risks.

## Is there any preparation before the MRI scan?

The MRI safety questionnaire included with your appointment letter, must be completed prior to your scan to ensure that you're safe to enter the MRI scan room.

If you answer YES to any of the questions, it is very important that you contact us.

**MRI queries line on 02921 846990, Mon-Fri 9am-5pm**

If you do not contact us, this may result in delays on the day or cancellation of your appointment.

Implants and devices must be reviewed prior to your MRI scan. Such queries can take some time to clarify so please be patient as this is for your own safety. Due to the MRI scanner using a very strong magnetic field, there could be situations where you may not be able to undergo your MRI scan.

Patients who have had penetrating injuries involving metal to their body, especially the eyes, may need to have an x-ray before their MRI scan. This is to ensure there are no pieces of metal remaining.

If you are having your head scanned please **DO NOT** wear any eye makeup as this can affect the image quality.

## Can I bring my children?

We are unable to provide child care and your children cannot come into the scan room. Please bring along an adult who can take care of your child whilst you have your MRI scan if they cannot stay at home.

## What happens on the day of my scan?

Once you have been greeted at reception by a member of staff, a radiographer will run through the MRI safety questionnaire you have completed. You will be given the opportunity to ask any questions you may have. The radiographer will ask you if you are happy for the scan to proceed.

Before entering the scan room all metal items need to be removed from your body and placed in a locker or left with a companion. This will include watches, piercings, jewellery, hair clips, metal plate dentures, coins, credit cards, keys and mobile phones. You may be asked to change into metal free clothing especially if you are wearing sportswear with metal threads.

Some scans do require an injection of MRI contrast. If this is the case then a cannula will be inserted into one of the veins in your arm either before or during the scan.

When safe and ready the radiographers will ask you to lay down on the scan table. You will be given either ear plugs or headphones to protect your ears from the noise of the scanner, which makes a loud, knocking noise when the scan is taking place. You will have a buzzer in your hand so that you can alert the radiographer at any point.

The body part under investigation will be positioned within the middle of the scanner and depending on what is being scanned a piece of equipment may be placed over that part of your body. The Radiographers can see you at all times and can communicate through an intercom system. An MRI scan usually lasts between 15 – 90 minutes depending on what part of the body is being scanned. It is important that you lie perfectly still throughout the scan.

**What is MRI contrast?**

MRI contrast is a liquid dye that is used to enhance the appearance of anatomy during an MRI scan. It contains gadolinium and is sometimes administered to patients during MRI examinations at the request of the radiologist (a specialist doctor trained to interpret the images). It is known that a small amount of gadolinium may remain in the body after a scan where contrast is administered. However, there is no evidence that gadolinium deposition has caused any harm to patients. If you need a scan with an MRI contrast agent to help with your diagnosis or treatment, you will be prescribed the lowest dose required for a clear image to be obtained. Further information from the manufacturer is available on request.

**What happens after my scan?**

After the scan is completed you are free to leave the department and can continue with your day.

Radiographers cannot give you the results of your scan, but will inform you how long it will take for the results to be written and how to obtain them.