

MRI

Patient information

This patient information sheet should answer any questions you have about your procedure. If you still have questions after reading this, you can visit the Diagnostics section of our website www.theholly.com, telephone the Diagnostic Centre on 020 8936 1202 or email diagnostics@theholly.com

This patient information leaflet will provide some information about Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) and what to expect before, during and after your scan. Some people are nervous before coming for an MRI scan but please be assured our staff will do their best to make you as comfortable as possible.

What is an MRI scan used for?

MRI can produce very detailed images of almost any organ in your body. It can be used to look at the brain, spine, abdomen, pelvis, joints, heart, and blood vessels. We can also use it to look at abnormal tissue, swelling or inflammation and problems with blood flow.

What is an MRI scan?

MRI stands for Magnetic Resonance Imaging and uses a magnet and radio waves to take detailed pictures of

the inside of your body. Metal can be affected by the magnet, so it is very important that you don't take any metal objects into the scanner room as these may distort the images or be damaged by the equipment.

What can't I take in with me?

For safety reasons you cannot bring anything with you into the MRI examination. It is very important that you leave items such as your mobile phone, coins, keys, pens, belt, watch, glasses, hair clips and jewellery in the lockers provided. Bank/credit cards and cards with a magnetic strip will be damaged and you must not take them with you into the examination room.

What should I do before the scan?

We will give you specific instructions to help you prepare for your MRI.



Please make sure you complete the safety questionnaire given or posted to you and return this to the Diagnostics Department. Please inform the MRI radiographer if you:

- have a pacemaker, artificial heart valve, shunt or stents
- have any metal fragments or implants anywhere in your body
- have ever had surgery involving any implants to your body for example stents or pacemakers
- have braces on your teeth
- have a tattoo
- are wearing any patches such as those for pain relief, HRT or nicotine.

If you are or might be pregnant, you MUST tell the Radiographer as soon as possible before the scan. MRI scans are not advised during pregnancy.

What does an MRI scanner look like?

MRI scanners come in different shapes and sizes, but mostly they look like a big circular drum with a hole in the middle.

Is MRI safe?

MRI has been used for many years. The MRI scanner does not use ionising radiation. The scan is noisy but painless – you will not feel the magnetic effect or the radio waves.

Will I need an injection?

You may need an injection of contrast agent. This highlights any anatomy and blood vessels in the area of interest. It is injected in a vein in your arm. Your arm may feel cold during the injection.

How long will the scan take?

Depending on the body part being scanned, it can take between 20 and 60 minutes.

Can I move during the scan?

It is vitally important not to move during the scan, as it will blur the image. If you lie still the scan will be over sooner. People often fall asleep.

Who will perform the scan?

The MRI is performed by a Radiographer and you will have a chance to ask any questions. The Radiographer will not be able to discuss the outcomes of the scan with you.

Preparing for your scan

You can usually eat and drink before your scan, but in certain circumstances such as abdominal and cardiac imaging we will give you specific instructions on how to prepare for the examination. You will usually be asked to change into hospital scrubs before your scan depending on the body part.

The MRI scanner

The MRI scanner is like a short tunnel. It is open at both ends and has a bed which slides into it. Most body parts can be scanned feet first but if you need a head, neck or shoulder scan you will have to go into the scanner head first.

The scanner is quite noisy and it can make some people feel a bit nervous. We can give you headphones so you listen to music if you like. A plastic coil will be placed around the body part that is being scanned.

During the scan

We will give you a call button which you can press during the scan to get the Radiographer's attention. There is also an intercom so you can speak to the Radiographer.

What happens after your scan?

After your scan one of our Consultant Radiologists will look at the scans and write up a report on them. This normally takes place within 48 hours. The report is then sent to your referring Consultant Doctor. Please make sure you have booked a follow up appointment with your referring Doctor to discuss your results.

Important information for patients paying for their own treatment

We respectfully request that your account is settled either by insurance authorisation or payment at the time of your appointment. A fee may be charged for non-attendance or if less than 24 hours notice is given to cancel an appointment.

Further information

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any further queries. You can telephone the Diagnostic Centre on 020 8936 1202 or email diagnostics@theholly.com. Alternatively you can visit the Diagnostics section of our website www.theholly.com

If you would like a copy of this information in large print or an alternative language, please call 020 8936 1214.

Please note we are unable to provide child care facilities during your examination and in most cases children will be unable to accompany you into the examination rooms.

Call: 020 8505 3311 (Main Switchboard)

Call: 020 8936 1202 (Diagnostic Centre)

Email: diagnostics@theholly.com

Visit: theholly.com

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