



## OPEN MRI

### What to expect from your scan

#### What is MRI?

MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) is a safe, non-invasive procedure that uses radio waves, a magnet and computer software to get two and three dimensional (3D) images of the inside of the body. Its main advantage is that it can detect various diseases in their early stages, especially in soft tissue.

#### What is an open MRI?

An open MRI scanner is open on three sides. This allows more space around the body and so is suitable for patients who are unable to tolerate a standard scanner.

#### What if I am claustrophobic?

Our Open MRI scanner is effective at reducing the feeling of claustrophobia due to its wide open shape. The scanning machine will remain above your body during the scan and above your head if you are having a head and neck scan. There will be more room above you than in standard MRI scanners and the front and back of the scanner are open (see image below).

Our team scan numerous claustrophobic patients each year, including severe cases, by doing their utmost to make patients feel as comfortable and at ease as possible throughout.

You are welcome to bring a friend or relative with you inside the scanning room (provided they meet all health and safety protocols).



If you are feeling particularly apprehensive we can arrange a pre-visit to our Centre to allow you to see the scanner. Please contact us if you wish to arrange this.

#### Is MRI safe?

All our scans are safe and there are no known risks or side effects associated with MRI. MRI does not use ionising radiation so can be carried out repeatedly without any negative effects. You will not feel any pain from our scanning machines.

The radiographer will ask you a health and safety questionnaire at the time of your scan to ensure you meet the criteria to have a scan and to minimise any risks. If you are pregnant you will not be able to undergo any diagnostic imaging as it is harmful to unborn babies.

#### How do I prepare for my scan?

You do not need to do anything special to prepare for your MRI scan. If you are having a scan of your gall bladder you must avoid eating for 4 hours before your scan.

#### What can I expect on the day of my scan?

You will need to arrive about 15 minutes before your appointment time. During this time we will ask you to complete an MRI safety questionnaire. Once we have reviewed your questionnaire we will decide whether to go ahead with your scan.

It is very important to be accurate when answering the questions. We may ask you to provide further information about any implants you may have before we can decide if it would be safe for you to have the scan.

You will be provided with a gown to change into, which helps to ensure clear scanning images.

All metal, including jewellery, is prohibited due to the magnet in the scanning machines. The radiologist will check that you have removed anything containing metal prior to your scan to ensure all health and safety protocols are met. You will have access to a locker for storing your belongings during the scan.

#### How long will it take?

The scan will usually take approximately 45 minutes for each part of the body being scanned.

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#### What can I expect during my scan?

The radiographer will position you on a special couch. They may put a surface coil around the part of your body being scanned (for example, the shoulder). Surface coils act like an antenna to receive the radio waves from the MRI system.

Once you are in the correct position, the radiographer will move the couch until the area of your body being scanned is in the centre of the scanning machine's magnet.

The radiographer will be able to see, hear and speak to you at all times through an intercom and viewing window and will give you simple directions during the scan.

#### What can I expect during my scan?

It is important that you stay completely still during the scan. The radiographer may even ask you to hold your breath at certain points. This is because movement can blur the images, making the scan less accurate.

You will be able to communicate with the radiographer through an intercom at any point during the scan. As the main magnetic field strength is altered during the scan using electromagnetic coils you will hear a wide range of sounds throughout your scan including banging, buzzing and rumbling noises.

#### Will I need an injection?

Some patients may need a 'contrast' injection to help make the images clearer, usually in parts of the body which have poor natural contrast. Contrast is a special liquid that highlights body tissue to make subtle differences or disease easier to see. Allergic reactions to contrast are rare. However, if you feel discomfort at any time during the scan, or if you feel sick, please inform the radiographer.

#### What happens after my scan?

You may eat and drink as usual and return to your normal daily routine straightaway.

If you have had a contrast injection, we advise you to drink plenty of fluids to help flush the contrast out of your system. Please also check the skin where we injected you for signs of infection (for example, redness, soreness or weeping) over the next 24 hours. If there are signs of any of these, please contact us immediately for advice or contact your doctor.

#### How do I receive my results?

After your scan, if you are a private patient the radiographer will provide you with a CD of your images to take away. (We do not usually issue CDs for non-private patients, unless the doctor or consultant who referred you has asked us to).

A radiologist will write a report and send it to the doctor or consultant who referred you, usually within 48 hours. Your report will contain a summary of the radiologist's findings and their recommendations for further follow-up.

You will need to arrange an appointment to discuss your report with the doctor or consultant who referred you for the scan.

#### Our chaperone service

All patients are entitled to have a chaperone present for any consultation, examination or procedure if they feel it is necessary. This chaperone may be a family member or friend. Sometimes it may be necessary for a formal chaperone (for example, a trained member of staff) to be present.

Please let us know before your appointment if you would like a chaperone.

#### Further questions

If you have any further questions or worries please do not hesitate to reach out to a member of our team. Your comfort and safety is of utmost importance to us.

For further information, including contact details and directions on how to find us, please visit our website: [www.harleystreet-medicalcentre.com](http://www.harleystreet-medicalcentre.com).

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We are committed to providing clean, safe premises for our clients in line with the Health and Social Care Act 2012, Code of Practice on the Prevention and Control of Infections and related guidance (December 2010) and all other Department of Health guidance.