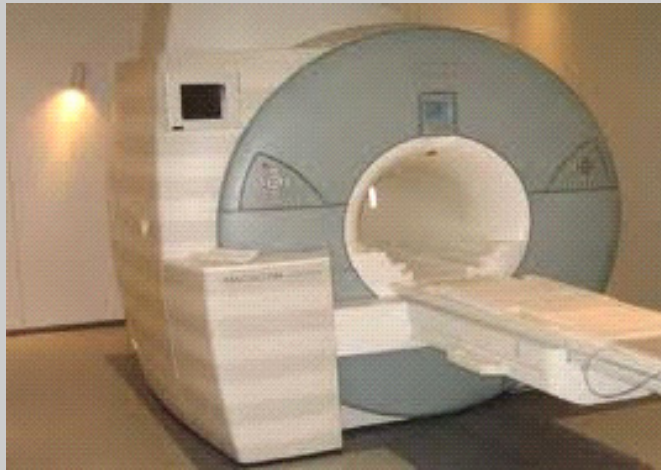


## Having an MRI Scan



at  
One of our sites

### **What is a MRI Scan?**

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) is a type of scan that produces detailed images of the inside of the body and is used to diagnose health conditions that affect organs, tissue and bone. One of the main advantages of MRI is that, unlike X-rays, it does not involve radiation.

### **Why is MRI Used?**

MRI can be used to look at almost any part of the body. It is most often used to study; the brain, the spine and nervous system, bones and joints, the heart and blood vessels, breasts, and the internal organs of the abdomen and pelvis.

### **How does MRI work?**

MRI uses magnetic fields of varying strengths together with radiofrequency waves which cause the area being scanned to emit a signal of energy. The signal produced contains different information depending on the type of body tissue being scanned, and is detected by placing a receiver coil around the body part being examined. A computer then processes these signals and generates a series of images into thin image slices of the body.

### **How safe is an MRI scan?**

Extensive research has been conducted into whether the magnetic and radio waves that are used in MRI could pose a risk to the human body. No evidence of such a risk has ever been found. This means that MRI is one of the safest medical procedures currently available.

MRI can, however, disrupt the working of certain medical devices, so it is important to ensure that anyone referred for an MRI by their Doctor or Consultant is safe to be scanned.

An MRI scan is not safe for patients with the following devices;

- Pacemaker or Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator (ICD)
- Implantable Nerve stimulators
- Cochlea implant
- Implantable Drug Pump
- Aneurysm clips (sometimes used after a bleed into the head or neck)

MRI may also be unsuitable for people who have had;

- Metallic fragments in or near the eyes
- Shrapnel injuries to the body (depending on the body location)
- Eye implants, such as small metal clips that are used to hold the retina in place
- Surgery involving metal implants, pins, stents or clips in the last eight weeks

Once you have been referred for an MRI scan you will be required to complete a medical questionnaire about your past medical history to establish whether it is safe for you to be scanned.

While there is no evidence that MRI scans pose a risk during pregnancy, as a precaution, scanning is not usually recommended.

## Preparing for your scan

Due to the strong magnetic fields that are used by the MRI scanner, it is important to remove any metal objects from your body before the examination. This includes; watches, belts, coins, keys, jewellery, piercings, dentures with metal plates, hearing aids, etc. The magnetic field can also affect credit cards and other devices such as mobile phones, pagers and swipe cards. You may therefore prefer to leave any valuables at home. **If for any reason you are unable to remove any items of jewellery please contact the bookings team as soon as possible for advice on 01603 812266**

## Attending for your appointment

Please arrive 15 minutes earlier than your allotted appointment time to enable us to ensure you are ready. Where possible please attend wearing clothing without metal fasteners and zips i.e. (t-shirts and jogging bottoms).

You will be asked to remove all metal and jewellery items before your scan, so please leave valuables at home whenever possible.

## During the scan

You will be asked to lie on the scanner couch while the MRI radiographer prepares you for the examination. A special 'coil' or camera will be placed over the area being scanned and you will be moved into the centre of the scanner, either head or feet first, depending on which part of your body is being examined.

The Radiographer will operate the scanner from the control room but will be able to see you and communicate with you through an intercom throughout the examination. You will also be given a call bell if you need to contact them quickly.

As the scanner takes the images it makes a loud tapping noise and you may feel some vibrations as the scanner works around you. You will be given ear plugs or head phones with music to minimise the noise and protect your ears. To avoid the images being blurred, it is important that you keep still throughout the procedure. Depending on the size of the area being scanned and how many pictures are acquired, a typical scan lasts between 15 and 60 minutes.

Sometimes it may be necessary for you to have a small injection of a contrast agent. This gives additional information in certain examinations and helps some tissues and blood vessels show up more clearly. This will be discussed with you by the Radiologist if it is required.

## After the examination

You will be free to leave the clinic as soon as you are ready. The scans will then be reviewed by a Radiologist (a Consultant who specialises in interpreting images of patients) and a report on the results of the scan will be written and sent to the referring Doctor or Health Professional.

**Norwich enquiries please call 01603 812266**

**Northampton enquiries call 01604 885002**

**Or visit our website [www.globaldiagnostics.co.uk](http://www.globaldiagnostics.co.uk)**

## Important Information

This is a general patient information leaflet only.

The information that you are given may differ to that provided here. This is because the information given to you is tailor made to your individual treatment.

It is very important that you follow the instructions that are given to you by your clinician.



ISO 27001  
IS 571793

ISO 9001  
FS 541391

Public

Issued March 2015

