

MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging)

What Is A MRI?

A MRI uses radio waves and a strong magnetic field to take pictures or images of your soft tissues, organs and bones.

These images help your doctor find your problem and plan your care. It is a painless test with no known health risks.

How Does MRI Work?

Your body is made up of atoms, which have a magnetic charge. When the body is placed in a strong magnetic field, these atoms tend to line up with the magnetic field. Then radio waves (like those used for TV) are sent into your body and these atoms make a weak signal. The computer uses these signals to form an image.

When You Are Being Scheduled For Your MRI

Let the staff know **right away** if you:

- Could be pregnant
- Weigh over 350 pounds
- Have any implanted device such as a pacemaker, defibrillator, aneurysm clips, or stent
- Have a joint replacement for your hip, knee, or shoulder
- Have any type of metal in your body like a plate, pins, shrapnel, or fragments
- Fear close spaces, also called claustrophobia

How Do You Prepare For A MRI?

- If you are having this test done as an outpatient, arrive 30 minutes before the test is scheduled.
- You will be asked to fill out a registration form so bring your insurance card and billing information.
- You may be asked about your health history.

What To Expect Before The Test

- Leave valuable belongings at home.
- Before going into the MRI room, you will need to remove any items from the body that can be effected by the magnet such as watch, hairpins, jewelry, coins, dentures, pocket knife, money clip, keys, or credit cards.
- Wear clothing with no metal zippers or fasteners. You may be asked to change into a hospital gown. A locker is provided for your clothes and belongings.
- To help you relax, you may bring a favorite CD or cassette tape to listen to during your exam. We will provide a special headset to listen to the music.
- If being in a close space frightens you, talk to your doctor before the test. Your doctor may give you some medicine to help you relax.
- You can eat, drink and take your regularly scheduled medicines before the test.

What To Expect During The Test?

- The staff will help you lay down on a padded table in the middle of a long tube-like machine.
 - Try to relax and lay very still during the test. You may sleep.
 - You will be able to see and talk to the staff through an intercom. Tell the staff if you need help or are uncomfortable.
 - The table will slide into the opening of the MRI machine until the part of your body to be checked is in the center.
 - The test is painless.
 - The machine will make a loud banging sound during the test. You will be given ear plugs to wear and may listen to music during the exam.
- * If you are having a test of your head, you may need to wear a helmet with a window.
- ** In the open MRI, your head and body will go inside the magnet but the sides of the magnet are open.

What To Expect After The Test?

- After the test, the staff will take you to a room to change into your clothes and get your things. If you are a patient in the hospital, you will be taken to your room.
- No special care is needed after a MRI. You may return to your regular activity and diet, unless your doctor has told you differently.

How Long Will The Test Take?

The length of your MRI depends on what body parts are being checked. Most MRIs last about 1 hour.

What If I Have More Questions?

Once your test is done, the radiologist (a doctor who specializes in x-rays) will study the MRI images and report the results to your doctor.

If you have questions, please ask your doctor or call the MRI department.

