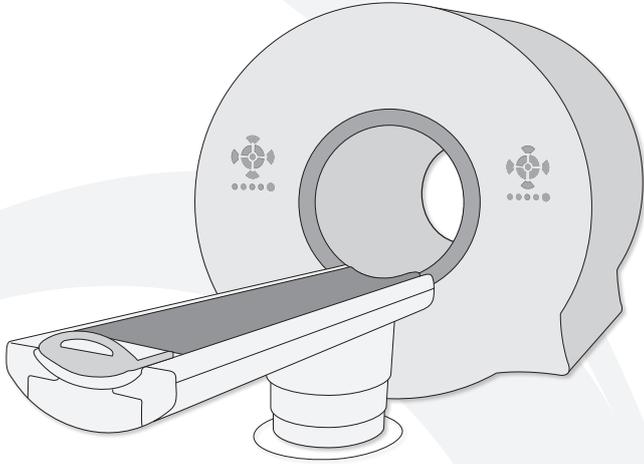


What is a MRI scan?

MRI stands for magnetic resonance imaging. This is a scanner which uses a powerful magnet and radio waves to take detailed images of your body. The images will be examined by a radiologist (a doctor who specialises in reading these images) in order to diagnose any problems.



What do I need to do before the test?

1. Please carefully **check your appointment** date and time. The MRI service works 7 days a week, including evenings.
2. Due to the strong magnetic field, it is not safe for some people to have an MRI scan.

Contact us if you:

- Are, or could be, pregnant (we consider on a case-by-case basis, with your doctor, whether the scan should be deferred or an alternative scan done)
- Are breast feeding
- Have a heart pacemaker or implanted defibrillator
- Previously had an accident where metal fragments entered your eyes or body
- Have had stents (tube like device implanted to keep open blood vessels or bile ducts) inserted within the last 8 weeks
- Have surgical clips in the head from an open operation (as distinct from a coil – see below)
- Have a hearing aid that cannot be removed or inner ear implants
- Have an implanted neuro-electrical stimulator

Failure to contact us regarding the above may result in your scan being cancelled or postponed on arrival. If you previously had an MRI scan in this hospital and have not had any of the above events since that last scan, then you do not need to re-inform us.

You **do not need** to contact us about:

- Artificial heart valves (they are all safe)
 - Joint replacements (e.g. hip or knee) done more than 8 weeks from the scan
 - Cranial aneurysm coils inserted into brain blood vessels (inserted through the top of your leg) since 2003.
3. Please carefully follow any additional instructions we have given you. For most scans you may eat, drink and take medications as usual.
 4. Please arrive at reception 15 minutes before your appointment to allow time to get you ready for your scan. The hospital is large and the imaging department is a 5 to 10 minute walk from the car park.

If you cannot keep your appointment or have any questions, please contact us on 0121 371 2365.

Where do I go for the scan?

Please follow signs to the Outpatient Imaging Department on Level 0 of Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham, Mindelsohn Way, Edgbaston, B15 2GW. Allow yourself enough time to get from the car park which is a 5 to 10 minute walk.

Can I bring a relative or friend?

Yes, but our waiting area is small, so please limit the number of people accompanying you. If you bring children less than 16 years old you will also need to bring someone who can supervise them while you are having your scan otherwise the scan will be postponed.

What should I wear?

Please attend for your scan wearing clothes with as little metal as possible. Sweaters, T-shirts, leggings and tracksuit bottoms are ideal. Often we may scan you in your clothes but sometimes it is more appropriate to change into a hospital gown. Changing facilities are provided. It is helpful if you wear loose fitting clothes around your arms as some scans require an injection of contrast dye.

All jewellery, piercings and hair accessories will need to be removed before going into the scan room. However you may usually leave a wedding band in place.

Please leave valuables at home. A small locker is available for essential items such as keys, watches and wallets.

What happens when I arrive?

You will be greeted by reception staff at the front desk and then directed to the MRI waiting area. You will need to complete a safety form before undergoing the scan. **If you cannot speak English, please bring another adult with you who can.** If this is not possible, please have someone contact us as soon as possible.

Please allow up to 2 hours in the hospital for your scan but occasionally this could be longer. The examination time on the scan table varies but will last a minimum 15 minutes, typically 30 minutes and occasionally up to 90 minutes. We do our best to run on time but your scan may be delayed for emergencies.

What happens during the scan?

A radiographer will explain what will happen, answer any questions and perform your scan. The machine is shaped like a short tunnel but is well lit and open at both ends. You will lie on the scan table and sensor pads will be loosely placed around the area to be scanned. The table moves into position. There is a gentle breeze in the tunnel. We understand that some people get anxious about going into the tunnel however, please be reassured that the majority of patients find it much easier than they expect. However if you find enclosed spaces particularly difficult (e.g. using lifts), please call us for advice before your appointment.

During the scan, the radiographer will be able to see you from the control room through a window and will be in communication via an intercom. You will be given a buzzer so that you may get the radiographer's attention at any time. The machine makes a repetitive knocking noise as the diagnostic pictures are being taken. It also makes clicks and other sounds in between acquiring the diagnostic pictures. You will be given either earplugs or headphones to reduce the volume. Consider bringing a music CD with you as we may be able to play it during some scans.

It is important to **keep very still** during the scan, especially when the pictures are being taken. For some scans we will ask you to **hold your breath** – please tell the radiographer if you think this will be difficult for you.

Sometimes we give an injection of contrast dye which shows up in your blood vessels and body organs giving us extra information. You will either have a needle or a thin plastic tube/cannula inserted into a vein in your arm in order to inject the dye. We will do this in the scan room or in a preparation room outside the scanner. If you are having this dye we will ask about your medical history including allergies, diabetes, asthma and kidney problems. You will be able to drive and continue your normal activities after this injection.

What happens afterwards?

You will usually be able to leave straight after the scan. There is no reason you cannot drive home and resume normal activities, unless we inform you otherwise prior to the scan. If you have had contrast dye, remove the plaster or dressing approximately one hour after the scan. You will also be able to eat and drink normally.

Are there any risks?

MRI does not use X-rays and there are no known risks or side-effects associated with MRI scans. Nevertheless we consider on a case by case basis if a scan can be deferred or an alternative scan done during pregnancy, especially in the earlier stages.

You may have a contrast dye injected into a vein in order to increase the amount of information obtained from the scan. You are unlikely to feel any effect from the injected dye. Very occasionally it can cause an allergic reaction. It may cause kidney damage to those who already have kidney problems. Very occasionally the contrast dye can leak outside the vein in your arm and cause temporary pain and local swelling – we will advise you what to do if this occurs.

How will I get the results?

The imaging department will not be able to give you the results. As a guide:

- If a hospital consultant or doctor from Outpatients referred you for the scan, you will get the result either in the Outpatient Clinic or by letter. If you have not heard from them within 4 weeks, please contact your consultant's secretary or the Outpatients Clinic
- If your GP referred you, please make an appointment to see him/her about 2 weeks after your scan

Imaging Department

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Mindelsohn Way, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2GW
Telephone: 0121 371 2365