

# MRI Scan

## What is an MRI scan?

A **Magnetic Resonance Imaging or MRI scan** uses a large magnet and radio waves to look at organs and structures inside your body. In some cases, we may use contrast media (dye) during an MRI scan to show certain structures more clearly.

Your doctor uses the results of an MRI scan to diagnose a variety of problems, from torn ligaments to tumours. MRI's are also very useful for examining the brain and spinal cord.

## How do I prepare for the procedure?

### Please let your doctor know if:

1. You are currently taking any medicines, including prescription or over-the-counter medicines, herbals and supplements, or blood thinners. Your doctor will let you which medicines, if any, to stop taking before your scan.
2. You are pregnant, think you may be pregnant or are breast feeding.
  - If you are in early stages of pregnancy, please contact the MRI department before your appointment.
  - At this time, it is not clear if the dye has any effect on breast milk.
3. You have any allergies. It is important to share if you are allergic to any type of dye.
  - If you do have known allergies, we suggest you wear your MedicAlert bracelet on the day of your visit.
4. You have any metal or electronic devices in your body, such as:
  - A pacemaker
  - A bullet, shrapnel or any other type of metal fragment (for example, if you are a welder).

### On the day of your MRI scan:

#### **Please bring the following to the hospital:**

- Your health card (OHIP) and photo ID.
- All the medicines you are currently taking, including over-the-counter medicines, herbals and supplements, in their original containers.

**Do not** bring jewelry or other valuables.

- Take your medicines as your doctor advised.
- Follow the instructions your doctor gave to you about what you can eat or drink before your scan. For example, you will usually have to stop eating or drinking around 4 hours before your scan. Having an empty stomach will help prevent you from feeling sick from the IV contrast.
- If you need support, you may have someone with you before the procedure.
- Before the procedure, we may ask you to remove all your clothes and change into a hospital gown.
- Please leave all jewelry at home. Be prepared to remove dental appliances, eyeglasses, hair clips, or metal objects you are wearing that may interfere with the images.

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## What can I expect during the procedure?

If you are receiving contrast (dye), we will need to start an intravenous (IV) line in your arm before the procedure.

If you are claustrophobic, your doctor can prescribe a medicine to take by mouth that can help you relax during the exam. **If you take this medicine, you must have someone drive you home after your procedure. You will not be allowed to drive yourself home.**

We will take you into the scanning room for your scan when the time is right.

Once we have finished the scan, if we gave you an IV, we will remove the intravenous line. We will ask you to apply some pressure on the site to prevent bleeding.

You will be in the hospital from 1 hour to 4 hours. The actual procedure on the scanning table will take from 30 to 60 minutes, depending on your scan.

## What can I expect after the procedure?

- You may be able to get dressed and go home soon after you have finished your scan.
- Your doctor will receive the results of your scan in about a week.

## How do I care for myself at home?

- Unless you are on a special fluid restriction diet, you may drink lots of fluid to help flush the dye out of your body faster.
- You may resume all your regular activities.



**Go to the nearest Emergency Department right away if you notice any of the following:**

- You feel different or worse than you did before your MRI scan (for example, nausea (sick to your stomach) or vomiting (throwing up)).
- You are consistently sneezing for 15 minutes.
- You suddenly have a rash.
- Your eyes are itchy.

**If you have trouble breathing or are short of breath, call 9-1-1.**