

Imaging

Having a gynae pelvic MRI scan

Information for patients, relatives and carers

This leaflet tells you about MRI scans, how to prepare for them and what will happen in your appointment. Please feel free to ask our team any questions.

What is an MRI scan?

MRI stands for magnetic resonance imaging. MRIs use magnets and radiofrequency waves to make images of a part of your body. The radio waves bounce back to a scanner when they reach your body. Then a computer in the scanner uses these radiofrequency waves to make the images.

Why do I need an MRI?

Your doctor thinks that you should have an MRI. The reason for this will depend upon your condition and the doctor should have explained this to you.

What are the risks and benefits of having an MRI?

The benefit of an MRI scan is that it is a safe and relatively quick procedure. It gives your doctors detailed information about a part of your body.

There are no known risks or side effects associated with MRIs. However, you must tell us if any of the items listed below apply to you, as this could affect your MRI. The radiographer doing your scan will be happy to answer any questions you have.

Is there anything I need to do before my MRI?

Please contact us **before** your appointment (using the information on page 4) if you:

- have had a recent magnetic resonance cholangio-pancreatography (MRCP) at another hospital outside of Imperial College NHS Trust
- have a **cardiac pacemaker/defibrillator**
- have a **cerebral** (brain) **aneurysm clip**
- have a **cochlear implant** (for hearing), a **neurostimulator** or a **programmable shunt**
- have an adhesive **glucose monitor** (worn on your arm)
- have ever had **metal fragments in your eyes**
- weigh **more than 114kg** (18st)
- are **pregnant** or **breastfeeding**

We try to avoid doing scans on pregnant women in the first three months of pregnancy. Please tell your doctor and the radiographer if you are pregnant or think you may be before the scan.

Are there any alternatives to this test?

Your doctor has asked for you to have an MRI because they think it is the best way to find out more about your condition.

Other tests like ultrasound and CT scanning might not be able to give your doctor the information they need.

How to prepare for the appointment

- try not to eat any food in the 2 to 3 hours before your scan – if you have to eat, please only have a light snack
- do not drink any caffeinated drinks like tea, coffee, cola or energy drinks (like Red Bull) – this is because caffeinated drinks can make your bladder fill up quickly and your bladder needs to be empty for the scan
- you can drink other drinks like non-caffeinated tea, water and juice in the hours before your scan
- you can take any of your regular medications like normal

What happens on the day of my appointment?

Please check your appointment letter and follow the instructions on how to get to your appointment. Go to the reception desk. The receptionist will ask you to fill in an MRI safety form. This is because there are magnets in the room which can affect certain metallic fragments and implants. Then the radiographer can check if the test might affect anything.

We will ask you to change into a hospital gown and remove any hearing aids, dentures and all your jewellery, including body piercings and watches. The radiographer will check your details, then take you into the scanning room.

The scanner makes quite a loud noise during the procedure. We can give you headphones and/or ear plugs to wear if you want them. In some imaging departments, you can bring a CD to listen to during the scan. Some imaging departments also have access to the internet, so you can listen to something specific on YouTube or the radio.

We will ask you to lie down on the scanning table. We'll put a special piece of equipment around the area of your body we're scanning. This is called a 'receiver coil' and it collects the returning radio waves to make the images. The table will then slide into the scanner, which is shaped like a small tunnel. The part of your body we are scanning will be in the middle of the scanner.

It is very important that you keep still during the scans, so we will try to make you as comfortable as possible. If you don't stay still, we might not get clear images.

An MRI usually takes about 30 to 45 minutes, but can sometimes take longer.

Buscopan

At the beginning of the scan, we might give some patients an injection of a medication called 'Buscopan'. This reduces the natural movements of your internal organs for a short time, which helps us get clear images. We will do the injection using a small needle into the muscle at the top of your arm or in your thigh.

There are 3 main possible side effects associated with the injection:

1. You may find that your vision is slightly blurred during the scan. This should wear off within an hour of the injection. You should not drive or operate machinery until you are sure your vision is back to normal.
2. You may also find that your mouth is slightly dry. Again, this should wear off within an hour.
3. You might feel that your heartbeat is going faster. This should wear off shortly after the injection.

Contrast medium

We might give some patients an injection of a special dye (known as 'contrast medium'). This will help us see the small bowel better.

If you need this, we will use a small needle to put a thin tube (called a cannula) in your hand or arm. Then we will inject the dye through the tube. The dye is safe and usually has no side effects, but a small number of people might experience nausea and/or vomiting immediately after the injection. If this happens, we can take a short break then continue with the test.

What happens afterwards?

Once the radiologist and/or radiographer are satisfied that the images show all the information they need, you can get dressed and go home. You can eat and drink normally and will get the results of your MRI at your next clinic appointment.

How do I get to the hospital?

Please visit the Trust's website for more information about travelling to our hospitals:

www.imperial.nhs.uk/our-locations

What if I'm not available for my appointment?

Please contact us as soon as possible. We can then offer this date to another patient and book a new appointment date and time for you.

You will find the right telephone number on your appointment letter.

Contact details

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns:

- **Imaging Department, Hammersmith Hospital:** Du Cane Road, London W12 0HS
Telephone: **020 3313 0077**
- **Mansfield Centre for Innovation, Hammersmith Hospital:** Du Cane Road, London W12
OHS Telephone: **020 3313 3298**
- **Imaging Department, Charing Cross Hospital:** Fulham Palace Road, London W6 8RF
Telephone: **020 3313 0077**
- **Imaging Department, St Mary's Hospital:** Praed Street, London W2 1NY
Telephone: **020 3312 7626**
- **Imaging Department, Wembley Community Diagnostic Centre:** 116 Chaplin Road,
London HA0 4UZ
Telephone: **020 3704 8540**

How do I give feedback about my visit?

We want to hear your **suggestions** or **comments**. Your feedback helps us provide the best service. You can always speak to a member of staff.

You can also contact the **patient advice and liaison service (PALS)** on **020 3312 7777** (10.00 to 16.00, Monday to Friday excluding bank holidays) or email at imperial.pals@nhs.net. The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or questions and they can help solve problems.

You can make a complaint by ringing **020 3312 1337 / 1349** or emailing tr.Complaints@nhs.net. The address is Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street, London W2 1NY.

Other ways to read this leaflet

Please email us at imperial.communications@nhs.net if you need this leaflet in a different format. This could be large print, Easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in a different language.

Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: www.imperial.nhs.uk