



## MRI Patient - Frequently Asked Questions

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MRI is a non-invasive diagnostic tool that combines a powerful magnet with radiofrequency waves and the latest computing technology to obtain detailed images of your body's soft tissues.

### IS MRI SAFE?

MRI does not involve exposure to ionizing radiation. However, because MRI is a powerful magnet, the presence of metal in or on your body could be a safety hazard. You will have to fill out a questionnaire that includes whether you have metal or electronic devices and change into clothing that we know is safe.

Unless you have a device or implant that is certified as MR safe or MR Conditional, you might not be able to undergo the procedure. These include but are not limited to:

- Cardiac Pacemaker/Defibrillator
- Aneurysm clip
- Nerve Stimulator
- Metallic stents (non-cardiac)
- Drug Infusion Pumps
- Ear Implants
- Bullet, shrapnel, or other type of metal fragments
- Breast-Tissue Expander
- Glucose Monitoring Device
- Any metal chips, shavings, or splinters in the eye regardless of when the eye injury occurred.

### HOW DO I PREPARE?

Before an MRI exam, you can eat normally and take your usual medications unless otherwise instructed. You will be asked to change into MRI safe clothing, a gown, scrub top and or pants. You will be asked to remove items that might affect the quality of the scan, such as jewelry. **Most tattoo and piercing facilities will take out your piercing and place a silicone spacer until after your MRI is completed.** Additional items include, but are not limited to:

- Hairpins
- Eyeglasses
- Watches
- Wigs
- Hearing Aids
- Bras
- Cosmetics that contain metallic particles or magnets

## WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

The MRI machine is a tube that is open on both ends. While the MRI procedure does not cause pain, it requires each patient to remain still during the examination which can be uncomfortable if you are unable to do so. You may want to connect with the provider that ordered the exam if you don't feel you can hold still for 20-40 minutes.

A technologist monitors you from another room. You can talk with the technologist by microphone when the machine is not making the noise. You will be given ear plugs, headphones or both to protect your hearing. You will be able to listen to your selection of approximately 40 different genres/decades of music during your scan.

## WHY IS IT SO NOISY?

The noises associated with MRI machines have been compared to jackhammers, saws, and other industrial noises. The noise comes from gradient coils switched on and off every few milliseconds which causes them to vibrate and produces noise. There are no moving parts around you.

## HOW LONG WILL THE MRI TAKE?

The length of the exam will vary depending on the body part. Typically, each exam is between 20 – 40 minutes if you are able to remain still.

## WHAT IF I AM CLAUSTROPHOBIC?

The technologist will be able to provide you with several optional techniques to help make you comfortable. Music, warm blankets, lavender scent, and a washcloth over your eyes or mirrored glasses are examples. Most patients are able to complete MRIs at our facilities without stress or further measures being taken.

However, if you feel this might not be enough for you to get through the exam, please talk to your provider a few days before your scan and they can prescribe an oral sedative for you to take prior to the exam. This will require that you have a driver to ensure you make it home safely.

## HOW DO I GET THE RESULTS OF MY MRI?

The images are being sent to a radiologist to be interpreted. Usually that process takes a few business days. Once your physician receives the results from the interpretation, they will begin the process of creating your care plan. If you haven't heard from them in five business days, or don't have a follow-up plan in place, it would be a good idea to reach out to your care team.