



PRIME
health

Having an **MRI** scan with Prime Health

Keep **you** healthy

Having an MRI scan with Prime Health

We hope the information in this leaflet will explain what is involved when having an MRI scan.

Although it is full of useful information, the leaflet is not designed to replace an informed discussion with your own clinician before your appointment.

However, we will be able to answer any questions or concerns about the scan when you arrive for your appointment.

All our facilities are wheelchair friendly.

What is an MRI?

An MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scan is a painless examination. It uses radio frequency waves and strong magnetic fields to create a series of detailed pictures showing 'slices' of the body. These images allow clinicians to examine almost any area of your body, as well as monitor the effectiveness of previous therapies. An MRI scan can diagnose problems that cannot be assessed satisfactorily with other imaging methods such as x-ray, ultrasound, or CT (computed tomography) scanning.

Are there any risks?

As far as is known at present, this is an extremely safe examination. It does not involve the use of radiation. You are placed in a very powerful magnetic field. If you have any small pieces of metal inside your body, you should inform the radiographer as in some cases you may not be able to have the examination. If you have ever had metal fragments, in your eyes, you may need an x-ray before the MRI is done to prove that there are no fragments remaining.

If you have a pacemaker, metal heart valves or a metallic clip in your brain, there is a risk that these may be affected during an MRI scan, and a different examination will need to be arranged instead.

For female patients, if you are or might be pregnant, you must make sure the Clinician referring you or a member of the MRI team know as soon as possible. MRI scans are not advisable in early pregnancy unless there are special circumstances.

Before your appointment is scheduled we will have asked you a number of questions (including the above) to ensure it is safe for you to have the scan.

Do I need to have any special preparation?

You do not usually need to prepare for a routine MRI scan at Prime Health. There are some MRI examinations which do require preparation and this will be confirmed at the time of scheduling and in your appointment confirmation letter. Unless you have been told otherwise, you can eat and drink normally before and afterwards.

Can I bring a relative or friend?

Yes, subject to infection control restrictions. However, for safety reasons they will not be able to accompany you into the MRI scanner room, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

When you arrive

Please follow the arrival instructions as set out in your appointment confirmation letter.

During your appointment, you will be looked after by a small specialised team, led by a radiographer who will carry out the scan. A member of the MRI team will ask you to confirm some details, including your identity and that you are happy for the MRI to go ahead. They will also go through the safety questionnaire with you, and you will be asked to sign it. Before signing the patient questionnaire and consent form, you need to understand what an MRI is, what to expect, and any possible risks.

For more information about Informed Consent please visit: [nhs.uk/conditions/consent-to-treatment](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/consent-to-treatment)

Before your scan, you may need to remove some items of clothing and leave any jewellery (except your wedding ring), cash, keys, credit cards, watch, etc in a secure locker.

What happens during the MRI?

The MRI team will show you into the scanner room and will help you into the correct position on the couch. They will use pads and pillows to help make you comfortable so that you can remain still during the scan.

Some people need to have a contrast medium to produce more detailed images, which involves an injection of dye. The dye is injected into a vein in your arm, which can make it feel a bit warm for a short while. If you need a contrast medium, you may also need to have a blood test before your scan as a precaution and to check your kidney function.

The MRI scanner is approximately four feet long and is open at both ends. During the scan, the couch is moved so that the body area being examined is in the centre of the scanner. You will be given headphones or earplugs to wear because the machine makes a loud humming noise.

The MRI team will be in the control room, but you will be able to talk to them via an intercom and they can see you on a screen. You will need to keep completely still while the images are being taken. If at any time during the scan you feel worried or uncomfortable, just let the MRI team know using the buzzer and they will do what they can to help.

How long will it take?

The MRI scan itself usually takes around 20 minutes and your appointment from start to finish is likely to be about 30 minutes. Please note if you are having more than one body area scanned the appointment will be longer.

Are there any side-effects?

There are no side-effects from the MRI scan itself. However, if you have had an injection of contrast medium as part of the investigation, you may have some side-effects which might include a skin rash, dizziness, a headache, and nausea. The MRI team will discuss this with you and answer any questions you may have before the injection.

Can I eat and drink afterwards?

Yes, you can eat and drink as normal.

When will I get the results?

After the scan, the images will be examined by the radiologist who is responsible for producing a written report on their findings to send to your referring clinician. Our radiologists are all qualified doctors and specialise in specific body areas, giving you, and your referring clinician confidence in the accuracy of your report.

Other sources of information

NHS: [nhs.uk/conditions/mri-scan/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/mri-scan/)

Finally...

We hope we have provided all you need to know about your examination, but do please let us know if you have any further questions.

Legal notice

This leaflet is intended only as general information.

It should not replace advice from your own medical professional and Prime Health cannot accept any legal liability arising from its use.

We aim to make the information as up-to-date and accurate as possible, but please be aware that it can be subject to change.

Please discuss any specific advice about the investigation or any concerns you may have, with your referring clinician.

Compliments, Concerns and Complaints

At Prime Health it is important to us that we give our patients the best care possible.

Please contact us to let us know your views and experiences of using our services. We are committed to improving what we do and how we do it and your feedback is particularly important. Following your appointment we will send you a questionnaire inviting you to provide feedback on your experience.

The Care Quality Commission (cqc.org.uk) also likes to hear feedback from patients as it helps them to decide when, where and what services to inspect.

Any concerns and complaints from patients or their representatives will be investigated thoroughly.

If you are unhappy with the service or care we are providing, please tell a member of staff whilst at your appointment.

If you are still not satisfied, please contact our Governance Team:

By email: governance@medicalimaging.org.uk

By post: Governance Team,
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