

# Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)

## What is an MRI?

MRI, magnetic resonance imaging, is a method used by physicians to look inside the human body to obtain diagnostic information. Incorporating an advanced technology, MRI produces images of the anatomy without the use of radiation found in X-rays and CT scanning.

MRI uses a computer and the physical properties of magnetic fields to generate images of the soft tissues within the body. It can help provide a quick and accurate diagnosis, which in some situations can reduce the need for exploratory surgery and other diagnostic procedures. MRI is a non-invasive procedure, and there are no known side effects. In fact, you won't see or feel anything uncomfortable during the scan.

## What kind of problems can be detected by an MRI?

An MRI is used for all parts of the body and is effective in the clinical evaluation of many conditions including brain disorders, spine diseases, tumor detection, knee and shoulder injuries, musculoskeletal disorders, infection, facial/neck abnormalities and liver diseases.

## What can I expect during the procedure?

No special preparation is required prior to the MRI exam. You may eat normally and go about your daily routine. Continue to take any medication prescribed by your physician unless otherwise directed. Because of the magnetic field, you will be asked to leave the following items in a safe place outside the scan room: coins, jewelry, watches, glasses, credit cards, hearing aides, keys, hair pins and other metal objects. You may be asked to wear a gown to avoid magnetic interference from belt buckles and zippers.

Once you are situated on the table, make sure you are comfortable so that it is easy to keep still. Breathe normally. There is nothing about the procedure to make you uncomfortable. The only thing you will notice is a faint knocking sound that represents the scanning process.

## How long does each MRI take?

The procedure typically will last anywhere from 30 to 60 minutes, depending on the type of information required by the physician. You just need to be as still as possible during the exam. In fact, some patients fall asleep during the MRI exam.

## Is there anything I should tell the technologist?

Because of the strong magnetic field in the MRI you should tell the physician and technologist about any head surgery (brain, eye, ear), pacemaker, neuro-stimulator, metal implant, aneurysm clips, implanted drug infusion device, spinal cord stimulator, metal object in the eye and surgical staples. Please refer to the MRI checklist given to you by the technologist for the full list of metallic objects. If you are pregnant, please notify the technologist and your physician.