

2019

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)

Please arrive 30 minutes before your appointment time.

If you are having an MR Enterography or MR Urography, please arrive 90 minutes (1 ½ hours) before your appointment time.

The MRI machines have size and weight restrictions. If you weigh more than 350 lbs (159 kg), please call the MRI department before your appointment.



www.nshealth.ca

What is an MRI?

MRI stands for Magnetic Resonance Imaging. An MRI machine uses a powerful magnet, radio waves, and a computer. It does not use radiation or X-rays. The MRI machine takes detailed images that show healthy and unhealthy tissues in your body. These images will help your doctor diagnose various conditions. An MRI is painless.

How long does an MRI take?

An MRI can take from 15 minutes to 2 hours, depending on the type of exam.

How do I get ready for the MRI?

- If you are claustrophobic (frightened of being in small spaces), please get medication from your family doctor and bring it with you, if needed. The MRI department does not provide this medication. If the patient is a child, please see '**Children**' on the back of this pamphlet.
- If you have any kidney problems, you may need to have bloodwork before your appointment. Please ask your doctor if bloodwork is needed.
- If your MRI is for your abdomen (belly) or pelvis, do not eat or drink anything for 4-6 hours before your exam.
- **Please do not wear perfume, cologne, or any other scented products to your appointment.** NSHA and the IWK are scent-free.

What should I bring to my appointment?


- Your provincial health card.
- If English is not your first language, bring someone to help you fill out the MRI Safety Screening Form and get ready for the exam. If you don't have someone to help you, please tell us as soon as possible so we can arrange for an interpreter.
- If you use medication for claustrophobia (as prescribed by your doctor), you will need someone to drive you home after your exam. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you will also need someone to stay with you overnight.
- Glasses to read, if needed.

What will happen at my appointment?

- When you arrive at the MRI department, you will have to fill out an MRI Safety Screening Form and it will be reviewed with you by an MRI Technologist.
- You will be given a locker to put your things in and asked to change into a hospital gown.
- We will ask you to remove all metal from your body. This includes hearing aids, jewelry, hairpins, watches, piercings, etc.
- If you have dental braces and need an MRI of your brain, eyes, ears, or jaw, please call the MRI department before your appointment.

- We will ask you to remove any make-up.
- You may need to have an MRI contrast (dye) given by an injection in your vein using an intravenous (IV) or a needle. The radiologist (doctor who specializes in medical imaging) will decide if this is needed to get a better image. In rare cases, some people have a reaction to the contrast dye.

What will happen during the MRI?

- The technologist will bring you into the MRI room, where you will lie down on a padded table.
 - MRI equipment will be placed on your body in the area where the MRI will be done.
 - The table will move slowly into the MRI machine, so that the part of your body being scanned is in the middle of the machine.
 - **It is important that you stay very still during the MRI.** Movement will cause the images to be blurry.
 - The MRI machine will make a lot of noise. This might sound like banging, buzzing, or beeping. The technologist will give you ear plugs or headphones to wear during your MRI to protect your hearing.
- 

What will happen after the MRI?

- If you were given contrast dye, drink lots of fluids for 12 hours after the MRI.
- You can go back to your normal activities right after the MRI.
- A radiologist will review your MRI images and send a report to your family doctor or regular health care provider. Your family doctor will go over the results with you.

Children

A child may need general anesthetic (medication to put them to sleep) before an MRI. A nurse from the IWK's Diagnostic Imaging department will contact the child's parents with instructions about fasting, medications, etc.

Pregnancy

- If you are pregnant, please call the MRI department to ask if your exam will need to be rebooked after you have your baby.
- MRI is considered safe for pregnant women, under special conditions. The exam is usually done after the first trimester, and an MRI contrast is not usually used. If you are not sure if you are pregnant, please take a home pregnancy test on the day of your exam.

The MRI machine is ALWAYS on.

- Every person who enters the MRI area must fill out an MRI Safety Screening Form.
- Every time you have an MRI, you must fill out an MRI Safety Screening Form.
- MRI exams are not suitable for everyone. Some implants may not be safe for an MRI exam. If you have any implanted objects or devices, please ask your family doctor for more information.

Tell the technologist if you have:

- › a pacemaker or implanted defibrillator
- › aneurysm clips
- › vascular stents/cardiac valves
- › an implanted drug infusion device (e.g., insulin pump)
- › inner ear implants
- › metallic plates, pins, screws, or other implants
- › a trans-dermal patch (e.g., nicotine, nitro, etc.)
- › had any surgeries
- It is not safe to have an MRI if your eye has been injured with metal and the metal is still there. Please tell the technologist if you have had an accident where metal has entered your eye. An X-ray of your eye may be done to check if the metal is still there.