



## **Understanding your MRI scan**

You have been referred for an MRI examination. This guide will tell you about the procedure and help you prepare for the appointment.

## What is an MRI?

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) uses magnetic energy and radio waves to produce detailed images of the inside of the human body.

It does this by 'slicing' through the area being scanned, one small section at a time, to gradually build a 3-D picture, just as slices of bread make a complete loaf when put together.

Doctors use MRI to help diagnose medical conditions and disorders. It does not involve radiation and nothing has to be inserted into your body.

## Important Safety Information

MRI is considered to be a very safe procedure with no known side effects.

However, because magnetic energy is used in the procedure, the scanner does attract metal objects, particularly those containing iron.

For this reason you should contact the MRI unit before your appointment if you have any metallic implants or devices such as:

- Artificial heart valves
- Artificial limbs
- Pins and plates in your joints
- Dental work
- Implanted electronic devices such as a pacemaker

You should also contact the MRI unit if you have **ever** had any metal fragments in your eyes.

If you are pregnant, or think you may be pregnant, you should consult your doctor about whether to postpone the scan or have a different procedure.

## Before your appointment

Some of our MRI centres require patients to confirm their appointment by telephone, 48 hours before. Please check your appointment letter to see if you need to do this prior to your appointment.

If there is a safety questionnaire enclosed with your appointment letter, please complete it before attending your appointment. If you answer yes to any questions from numbers 1 to 6 please contact the MRI Centre.

Watches and credit cards can be affected by the scanner so you should not take them into the scanning room. You may prefer to leave these items at home.

Please avoid wearing make-up if you are having a head or neck scan, as some brands contain particles that can affect the quality of the scan.

Please try to wear light clothing with no metal fastenings, such as a tracksuit, so you don't need to get changed.

If you need help because you speak a different language, or you want a friend, relative or carer to come with you, please contact us when you receive your appointment.

## When you arrive

When you arrive the radiographer on site will explain the scanning procedure to you. If you have any questions, please ask the radiographer. For some scans, we may ask you to change into an examination gown, particularly if your clothing contains any metal fasteners.



## **The examination**

During the scan we will ask you to lie very still on the MRI table. The table has a two-way intercom which you can use to communicate with the MRI staff during your scan.

A piece of equipment will be placed around the part of your body being scanned. This equipment picks up the MRI signal from which the images are produced.

As the scan begins, you will hear a drumming noise and a few clicks as the machine is set up. The noise continues throughout the scan but you will be given ear protection to minimise it.

For some scans, we will give you an injection to improve the quality of the scan. If this is required for your examination the radiographer will explain and answer any of your questions.

## **How long will it take?**

This depends on the part of the body being scanned. It is possible the scan will take up to an hour but many scans only take about 20 minutes.

## **When will I get the results?**

Our radiographers are qualified MRI professionals who specialise in obtaining high quality images however, they are not trained to diagnose problems from the scans. Please don't ask the radiographer to comment on your images as they are not allowed to do so.

The medical professional who referred you will receive the MRI report. You should contact your referrer to receive your results unless he or she has made different arrangements with you. We will contact you if we need to carry out further investigations.

## Informed consent

The information contained within this leaflet is intended to provide you with an overview of the examination or treatment that you are to receive. Prior to any medical procedure being carried out, the healthcare professional conducting the procedure will describe the nature of the examination or treatment you are to receive and will detail any risks associated with the procedure. It is your right to be given sufficient information to be able to make an informed decision as to whether you wish to continue with the examination/treatment or to refuse to undergo the procedure.

The nature of some examinations and treatment requires that your consent to continue must be given in writing and a form will be provided for you to sign. Some examinations may only require your verbal consent. For further information regarding our consent policy, please contact the Centre to which you have been referred.

We take pride in the standard of service which we offer at InHealth. If you do have reason to complain, however, we take your comments seriously and a full complaints procedure is available upon request. Please ask a member of staff at the Centre who will be able to provide you with a copy, alternatively call the Central Bookings line on 0845 603 0854 for a copy of the policy or to make a complaint. If you are unhappy with our handling of your complaint, you can contact the External Adjudication Secretariat, C/O Independent Healthcare Advisory Services, Centre Point, 103 New Oxford St, London, WC1 1DU. Alternatively you can telephone 020 7379 8598 or visit [www.independenthealthcare.org.uk](http://www.independenthealthcare.org.uk)

## Data Protection

InHealth will keep the information you provide for internal purposes. We may also share the information you provide, but from which you cannot be identified, with those responsible for meeting your treatment or expenses (or their agents) for research, statistical, educational, administrative or contractual purposes (for example, audit and continuous improvement). This will include the National Health Service if you are a NHS patient.

If you have any comments or suggestions about our patient information leaflet, please also direct them to the Imaging Services Manager. This patient information leaflet is reviewed bi-annually and patient observations are welcomed as part of that process. Braille, and large print versions of this leaflet are available on request.

## About InHealth

InHealth is a leading provider of healthcare services operating exclusively in the UK working predominantly within the NHS, but also services the needs of private health care providers. The company vision is founded upon a desire to improve health care provision through the delivery of innovative, efficient, appropriate and leading edge services and by so doing, improving the health of the nation and the working lives of the professionals within it.