

What is MRI?

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) is one of the most technologically advanced diagnostic tools available. MRI uses a powerful magnet, low intensity radio frequency pulses and computer technology to create images of the soft tissues, muscles, nerves and bones in your body. There are no known side effects of MRI and it uses no radiation. In many instances it replaces the need for CT or X-rays, which do utilize radiation to produce images.

How does MRI work?

The main component of the MRI scanner is a large magnet. This magnet causes your body's hydrogen atoms to align themselves in such a way as to receive radio signals from the magnetic resonance system. When your body receives these signals, it reacts by sending its own radio signals back to the machine. It is this radio-frequency transmitted by your body that is computer-processed and turned into detailed images which are read by radiologists.

Is it safe to have a MRI exam?

For most patients, having a MRI exam is safe and painless. However, because MRI uses a strong magnetic field, some patients may not be able to have this type of exam.

Please check the following list carefully and inform your medical provider if you have or have had any of the following:

- Pacemaker
- Aneurysm clips
- Inner ear (cochlear) implants
- Implanted spinal cord stimulator
- Metallic implants
- Metal fragments in one or both eyes

What can I expect on the day of my exam?

Please plan to be in the imaging center for approximately one hour for your MRI exam. The MRI technologist will walk you through a series of questions to ensure we have all the pertinent information needed prior to your exam. For your safety and comfort, the technologist will then ask you to change into scrubs and to remove any metal from your person (such as jewelry, watches, etc.) You will be given a locker to secure your belongings during the exam.

The technologist will make you comfortable on the table, provide you with ear plugs or headphones to listen to music, and will then begin the exam. Most MRI exams last between 20 and 40 minutes. The radiologist will review your exam and the results will be sent to your provider for review.