

MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging)

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) uses a very powerful magnet and radio-frequency pulses to collect signals that are then processed by a computer to form a picture of the body part being studied. Images line up like slices from a loaf of bread.

MRI gives a detailed picture of the soft tissues of the body e.g. muscles, ligaments, brain tissue, discs and blood vessels.

Who cannot have an MRI scan?

Anyone with a pacemaker, neurostimulator, cochlear implant or metal chips in their eye must NOT go near such a powerful magnet.

Anyone with a medical implant, ie aneurysm clip or stent must inform staff prior to the MRI to assess whether it is safe within the scan environment. Most metal put in at surgery (hip replacements and metal rods) is safe.

You will need to complete a safety questionnaire prior to the procedure.

Is an MRI scan safe?

MRI uses no x-ray radiation. The radiowave pulses are of similar frequency to your radio. The powerful magnet does not have any known side effects.

Will it hurt?

MRI is painless but may be very noisy, and scans take up to 30 minutes in most cases. You may become a little uncomfortable lying still for that period.

Preparation

In most cases there is no special preparation and you can eat and drink normally.

If you think or know that you may have problems with enclosed spaces (claustrophobia) then it is advisable to contact us prior to the scan. There are several techniques that the technologists will employ to assist you. However, if sedation is required you will need to arrange oral sedation with your doctor prior to the MRI examination.

If you are taking any pain medication please do so such that its peak action corresponds to the intended scan time.

Other medications should be taken as normal.

Do not wear eye make-up or hairspray if you are having a head scan.

Procedure

On arrival, you will be asked to complete a safety questionnaire to ensure that you are eligible to be scanned. Certain implants and metallic objects will exclude you from an MRI scan.

If you have worked in the welding industry or have ever had metal fragments in your eye then you MUST inform us so that you can have eye x-rays to ensure that no fragments remain. It is imperative to have any metal fragments removed prior to the scan.

You may be asked to change into a hospital gown and remove all metal jewellery. You will be provided with a secure site to store your valuables including watch and wallet.

For some examinations your heartbeat may need to be recorded by placing small patches and wires on your back and chest.

During the scanning process

Prior to the scan beginning a piece of equipment may be placed around the body part being scanned (depending on the nature of the examination).

You will be asked to lie on a movable table which positions the body part to be imaged in the centre of the machine.

During the examination you will hear a series of loud knocking noises and may feel a slight vibration. Earplugs will be provided. Music maybe provided for certain exams.

It is important that you remain as still as possible during the scan otherwise the images taken will appear blurry.

Constant communication, both verbal and visual, is maintained throughout the scan to ensure that you are comfortable and updated on the progress of your examination. If at any time you become uncomfortable, a buzzer enables you to communicate with the technologist.

Will I require an injection?

Most MRI tests will not require a contrast injection, however in certain circumstances it may improve the accuracy of the scan. This injection (gadolinium solution) is usually into an arm vein. It is not like the contrast used in x-ray examinations.

What if I'm pregnant?

If you are pregnant, or could be pregnant at the time of your appointment, please contact us prior to that time so that the situation can be discussed with your referring doctor.

MRI is usually avoided in the first trimester of pregnancy unless the diagnosis cannot wait and your doctor considers MRI to be the best investigation.

Please contact your referring doctor to discuss the results.

When will I get my results?

MRI investigations contain specialised and complex information. A large number of images are produced and review of these images may take several hours. Usually the report is available to your referring doctor within two working days.

For some examinations the clinic may electronically send your examination for additional super-specialist opinion elsewhere in Australia.

How long will the procedure take?

30-60 minutes in total depending on the examination.

PLEASE BRING ANY PREVIOUS X-RAYS OR SCANS WITH YOU ON THE DAY OF YOUR EXAMINATION.

CONFIRM ANY PREPARATION REQUIRED WITH STAFF WHEN MAKING YOUR APPOINTMENT.

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Leaders In Diagnostic Imaging

Your doctor may request to go filmless

With the growing use of digital imaging, Northside Medical Imaging is giving doctors the opportunity to not receive hard copy films and to replace them with electronic reports and images – in other words, go “filmless”.

If your referring doctor elects to go “filmless,” once you have completed your medical imaging examination, you will no longer have to wait for x-ray films. The images will be sent electronically to your doctor’s computer together with a report from our Radiologist.

If you require films in the future, all films are stored digitally and can be requested at anytime with 24 hour notice.

MRI IS PERFORMED AT OUR HORNSBY CLINIC ONLY

Northside Medical Imaging clinics

Hornsby

53 Palmerston Road, Hornsby 2077
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Hornsby

14 Edgeworth David Avenue, Hornsby 2077
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