

Learning about your MRI

What is an MRI?

An MRI is a scan – a way of making clear pictures of the inside of your body. Your doctor wants you to have an MRI to look at a certain part of your body, such as your brain or bones. An MRI is not the same as having an x-ray. It uses a powerful magnet and radio waves to make the pictures, not radiation.

Metal is attracted to the magnet, so nothing made of metal can go into the MRI room. We will ask you to take off anything metallic, such as a watch, buckle, hair clips and jewelry. If your clothes have any metal parts such as zippers or snaps, you can change into a hospital gown.

What happens during an MRI?

To show you what happens we've taken a picture of our doggie friend getting ready to have an MRI. You can see the MRI machine in this picture – it is shaped like a doughnut!



When you are ready, you will lie down on the bed.

The person running the machine (called the technologist) moves the bed so that the part of your body that we want to look at will be in the middle of the doughnut.

Your Mom or Dad will be waiting nearby.

You have to lie still while the pictures are taken. If you move, the pictures will come out blurry and have to be taken again. The MRI takes about half an hour, about the same time as a cartoon show. It doesn't hurt at all.

Sometimes lying still is hard to do. It can help to watch a movie while the machine does its work.

You can choose one of our DVD's or bring one from home. Then put on our special goggles and headphones.



Once you are settled and watching your movie, the technologist will go into the computer room. The technologist will still be able to see and hear you. When the technologist speaks to you, you will see and hear him/her through your goggles and headphones.

When the machine is on it makes a lot of sounds. The technologist will give you earplugs to wear. With the earplugs and headphones on you may not hear the sound of the machine, but you may feel a little shaking. This means the machine is working.

Sometimes, we need to use a special medicine (called contrast) to make the part of your body we are taking pictures of look brighter. You may have to have a little poke with a tiny needle so the medicine can go into your body.



What if I need to move?

If you must move, to scratch or go to the bathroom, just speak up. The technologist can hear you. You will also have a buzzer to push if you need help.

What happens after the MRI?



Right after the MRI, the technologist slides the bed out and you can get up. Then you can go and enjoy the rest of your day. It's OK to do all your usual activities.

Your nurse or doctor will be happy to answer any questions you have about your MRI.