

Sedated MRI

Information for parents

Your child is going to have a test called a sedated MRI. “Sedated” means your child will be given a medication to help him/her feel sleepy and lie still during the MRI scan.

This information sheet will help you know what to expect before, during and after this test. We have also included our suggestions for how to explain the MRI to your child.

What to bring to the hospital

Please bring your child’s Ontario Health Card and a list of your child’s medications. The medication list should include:

- the name of each medication
- how much is given (dose)
- how often it is given
- how it is given (for example, by mouth or g-tube)

Before the test

When you arrive at the MRI centre, check in with the receptionist. Your arrival is usually 1 hour before the actual time of the test. You will be asked to sit in the waiting area. The staff will come out to greet you and your child. During this hour, members of the health care team will meet with you to gather and provide information before the test.

Who you will meet and what they do

Nurse

The nurse will ask you:

- about your child's health, including past surgeries
- if your child has had an MRI before
- how your child has been feeling (if he/she has been ill, if you have any concerns)

The nurse will weigh your child and take his/her blood pressure and pulse (heart rate).

If needed, the nurse will put a special cream on your child's hands to numb the skin where the intravenous (IV) will be started. The cream must stay on so that it can begin to work as your child is waiting for the test.

The nurse can tell you when you can expect to be with your child after the test. The waiting time varies, depending on the type of MRI.

Radiologist

You will meet this doctor if your child's MRI needs "contrast". Contrast is used to make the area being scanned brighter and easier to see. The radiologist will explain what contrast is and why it may be needed.

Anesthesiologist/Intensivist

You will meet this doctor before the test or when it is time for your child to be sedated. This doctor can answer your questions about sedation.

Child Life Specialist

When possible you will meet a Child Life Specialist who can:

- explain to your child what will happen, in a way he or she can understand
- help your child become familiar with the hospital equipment that he/she will see and feel

MRI Technologist

You will meet the MRI Technologist when it is time for the scan. The MRI Technologist will help to prepare and position your child for going into the MRI machine, and take the MRI images when your child is ready.

During the test

When it is time for the scan, you and your child will be brought to the sedation area. There is a bed where your child will sit or lie down. You can stay with your child while he or she is sedated.

The first step is to start an IV. You can help by distracting your child while this is done. The sedation is usually given through the IV. Occasionally, there is a need for the doctor to give 'sleep gas' through a mask. This will make your child go to sleep before the IV is started.

Once your child has the IV, he or she will lie down on the MRI bed. The doctor will start to give the medication to help your child go to sleep. The 'sleep medicine' may sting as it goes into your child's vein. Your child will soon go to sleep. The nurses and MRI technologist will prepare your child for going into the MRI. This includes putting 'stickers' on your child's chest to record his/her heart beat, and placing soft ear plugs to lessen the noise of the machine.

When your child is ready, he or she will be moved into the MRI room. While your child is having the test, you may take a break and return to the waiting area.

After the test

Once the test is done, the nurses will check your child. You will stay in the waiting area until your child is ready to wake up. Then, the nurse will call you to come and be with your child. The wait time will depend on the type of MRI. The nurse will tell you when your child is ready to go home and teach you how to care for your child after the sedation.

Here is a simple way to describe the MRI to your child:

MRI stands for Magnetic Resonance Imaging. An MRI is a scan – a way of making clear pictures of the inside of your body. The 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. That means that you cannot wear anything metallic, such as a watch, buckle, hair clips and jewelry. If your clothes have any metal parts such as zippers or snaps, when you get to the hospital you can change into hospital pajamas.

You have to stay very still for the test. You may be given sleep medicine to help you stay still while the pictures are being taken. This is a different kind of sleep than at home. You will not hear, see or feel anything; you will just be sleeping while the machine is taking pictures of inside your body.

When the test is finished, you will wake up and your mom and/or dad will be beside you. You will have to rest a while before you can go home. The nurses will give you something to drink and something to eat like a popsicle or cereal. When you are ready, you will be able to go home to relax for the rest of the day.

**If you have any questions about the Sedated MRI ,
please talk with a member of the health care team.**