

UnityPoint Health - Finley Hospital Radiology Patient/Family Information
MRI

What is Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)?

MRI, or magnetic resonance imaging, is an imaging exam that is used to diagnose potential medical problems in many different parts of the body. In general, MRI creates pictures that can show differences between healthy and unhealthy tissue. Doctors use MRI to examine the brain, spine, joints (i.e. knee, shoulder, wrist and ankle), abdomen, pelvic region, breast, blood vessels, and other body parts.

MRI does not use radiation but requires specialized equipment that uses a powerful constant magnetic field and radiofrequency energy or radio waves and a computer to create pictures of internal body structures.

Preparation

Please bring your medication list with you to your exam.

There is no special preparation necessary for the MRI examination. There are no food or drink restrictions prior to the MRI exam unless anesthesia is required for your comfort. Please refer to your doctor's instructions in this instance. Continue to take any medication prescribed by your doctor unless otherwise directed.

You will not be allowed to wear anything metallic during the MRI exam, so it is best to leave watches, jewelry or anything made from metal at home.

In order to prevent metallic objects from being attracted by the powerful magnet, certain exams will require the patient to wear a gown during the examination. Items that need to be removed by patients prior to entering the MRI room include:

- Purse, wallet, money clip, credit cards with magnetic strips
- Electronic devices such as beepers or cell phones
- Hearing aids
- Metal jewelry, watches
- Pens, paper clips, keys, coins
- Hair barrettes, hairpins
- Shoes, belt buckles, safety pins

Before the MRI exam, the patient will be asked to fill out a screening form asking about any metal that may be implanted in the patient's body. Items that create health hazards during an MRI include:

- Pacemaker – any patients with pacemakers are not able to have an MRI
- Implantable cardio-verter defibrillator (ICD)
- Neuro- stimulator
- Aneurysm clip

- Metal implants
- Implanted drug infusion device
- Foreign metal objects from welding or accidents, especially if in or near the eye
- Shrapnel or bullet wounds
- Permanent cosmetics or tattoos
- Dentures/teeth with magnets
- Other implants that involve magnets
- Medication patch (i.e., trans-dermal patch) that contains metal foil

Check with the MRI technologist if you have any questions or concerns about any implanted object or health condition that could impact the MRI procedure at 563-589-2402. This is particularly important if you have undergone surgery involving the brain, ear, eye, heart, or blood vessels.

Patients who are claustrophobic may require sedation prior to the MRI exam. Please contact your physician and discuss the use of medication that can be taken at home before the exam. Be aware that you must have someone drive you to and from the hospital if sedation is used.

Important Note: If you are pregnant or think that you could be pregnant, you must notify your physician prior to the MRI procedure.

MRI exams are scheduled by calling 563-589-2404.

What Happens During the Test?

The MRI examination is performed in a special room that contains the MRI scanner. You will be asked to lie down on a padded table. The table will be raised and slides into the scanner. Patients are required to wear ear plugs or headphones to protect their hearing from the loud knocking noises that the scanner produces to create the images.

For some MRI exams, an IV dye or contrast called gadolinium maybe injected into a vein to better define the area being imaged. Unlike IV dye or contrast that is used in x-ray studies, the MRI contrast does not contain iodine and therefore rarely causes allergic reactions or other problems.

The most important thing for the patient to do is relax and lie still. Patients are asked to remain perfectly still during the time the imaging takes place. Patients may breathe normally, however, for certain exams, it may be necessary for you to hold your breath for a short period of time. During an MRI exam, the MRI technologist will be able to speak to you, hear you, and observe you at all times.

Most MRI exams take between 15 to 45 minutes to complete depending on the body part imaged. Some exams may take 60 minutes or longer, the technologist will inform the patient prior to the exam of the approximate time the exam will take.

When the exam is finished, the patient may be asked to wait until the images are examined to determine if more images are needed. After the scan, the patient will have no restrictions and can go about normal activities.

When Will I Know the Results?

The radiologist will review and interpret the scan shortly after the exam is completed. A written report will be sent to your doctor. Your doctor will discuss these results with you.

Please allow your physician the time needed to review these results.

Name: _____

Exam Date/Time: _____