



MAGNETIC RESONANCE IMAGING (MRI)

Arkansas Children's Hospital

What is Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)?

MRI is a test that uses a large magnet, radio waves, and a computer to take pictures of the inside of your child's body.

How are the pictures taken?

- The MRI machine is a tube (tunnel) into which a special bed slides. Your child will lie on the bed with a safety belt and can talk to the technologist if needed. Your child will be watched through a window or camera during the time the pictures are taken. Your child will need to be still for 30 minutes - 2 hours.
- MRI staff will escort you and your child to the MRI scanner.
- If contrast (dye) is needed we will start a small I.V. (a tube put into a vein in your child's hand, arm or foot) before the test begins.
NOTE: If your child has ever had a reaction to contrast (dye), please tell us before the test.
- Sedation (medicine that helps your child go to sleep for the test) may also be given through the I.V. if your child cannot be still.
- The MRI machine uses a very strong magnet. For that reason, we have your child change into our hospital pajamas to prevent any injury to the magnet, staff or patient. Before your child and you enter the MRI room, you will be asked to fill out a screening form that asks about any metal present in your child's body or in your pockets (such as watches, pagers, phones). All metal will need to be placed in a locker outside the MRI room.
- Older children may be able to watch a video or listen to music during the MRI. You may bring a favorite movie or CD from home.

Who performs the test?

A MRI technologist, a person licensed and trained to take these special pictures, takes the pictures and checks the films to make sure they are of good quality.

Who looks at the pictures?

A pediatric radiologist, a doctor specially trained in children's X-rays, looks at the pictures and then sends a report to your child's doctor.

Are there any risks?

- There are no known risks for MRI as long as there is no metal inside your child's body.
- If your child gets contrast, there is a small chance for an allergic reaction (like a person allergic to bee stings). This can include hives, itching, sneezing, and trouble breathing or other more serious problems.
- Your child's nurse or technologist will discuss the risks of contrast (if given) with you before the test.
- If your child receives sedation, your doctor will discuss risks with you before you are asked to give permission for the sedation.

What happens after the test?

- The technologist or the nurse will give you any special instructions and tell you when your child can leave.
- If your child is sedated, he or she will need to stay until they are awake. This may take up to 2-3 hours.
- After the test, your child may eat or drink as usual, unless your child's doctor tells you not to feed him or her.
- If contrast was given, it will leave your child's body through their urine within 24 - 48 hours after the test. The color of the urine should remain normal.

Can my child eat before the test?

- Your child can eat before the test unless they are scheduled for sedation, which will be discussed at a prior time.

NOTE: Two adult family members may stay with the child during the test as long as the child is not sedated and the two adults wanting to stay do not have any metal in their body that is unsafe in the MRI. Brothers, sisters or pregnant mothers will not be allowed in the room.

Because the effects of MRI on an unborn child are unknown, female patients ages 10 and above will be required to take a pregnancy test before the exam can be performed.



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PREPARING MY CHILD

Infants

Although you cannot explain the test to your baby, you can help your baby feel more secure during the test if you:

- Bring a special blanket, toy or pacifier.
- Comfort him or her with your presence and voice.
- Bring along a bottle of juice or formula to give after the test is done.

Toddlers and preschool-age children

- Young children can become anxious about having a test done, so the best time to talk with your child is right before the test.
- On the day of the test, tell your child that he or she will be having some "pictures" taken, so the doctor can help them feel better.
- Use simple words and be honest.
- When you come to the hospital, bring a favorite book, toy or blanket.
- You may bring a snack for after the test.

School-age children

- School-age children have good imaginations and may frighten themselves by imagining something much worse than the actual test.
- On the day of the test, tell your child that he or she will be having some "pictures" taken, so the doctor can help them feel better.
- Use simple words. Be honest and explain exactly what will happen.
- When you come to the hospital, bring along a favorite book, toy or game.
- You may bring a snack for after the test.

Photographs/Videos

If you want to take any pictures or videos, please discuss this with the technologist before your child is taken into the exam room.



PATIENT NAME: _____

APPOINTMENT DATE: _____ TIME: _____

PATIENT PREPARATION/SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS: _____

MRI Department at Arkansas Children's Hospital

(501)364-3510 • Monday - Friday, 7:30 a.m. - 8 p.m.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room right away. This is general information and is not specific medical advice for your child. Always consult your child's doctor or other health care provider if you have any questions or concerns about the care or health of your child.