Magnetic Resonance Imaging, or MRI, is a painless, diagnostic test that allows radiologists to see inside some areas of the body, which cannot be seen using conventional x-rays. This imaging method produces a series of cross-sectional pictures. Physicians can detect many conditions in earlier stages improving prognosis.

How to Schedule an MRI Exam

A prescription from a physician is required for an MRI exam. You may need a referral from your physician or pre-authorization from your insurance company. Consult with your physician before scheduling your appointment.

MRI Services are performed in the following locations; please contact us for more information or to schedule an appointment:

St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center, Paterson: 973.754.2283

St. Joseph's Wayne Hospital, Wayne: 973.956.3312

St. Joseph's Ambulatory Imaging Center, Clifton: 973.569.6300

St. Joseph's Ambulatory Imaging Center at Carlstadt 201.372.1020

Common uses

Areas of the body, which may undergo a MRI scan include the head, chest, abdomen, vital organs, blood vessels, joints, spine, or extremities such as hands, wrists, ankles, and feet.

Safety

MRI scanners do not use x-rays. Instead, they use a very strong magnet and radio frequency. It is important to tell the technologist if there is a possibility you could be pregnant. There is no evidence that MRI is unsafe for a developing fetus; however, we are still careful in the use of MRI on pregnant patients. Our staff is trained in MRI safety. Our equipment is maintained according to the American College of Radiology Guidelines.

Surgical Implants

Certain metallic implants are not safe for MRI. Inform the staff of any surgical implants. Patients with pacemakers or defibrillators cannot have a MRI under any circumstances.

Pediatric MR Imaging

We welcome pediatric patients at our imaging centers. Children requiring conscious sedation, however, are limited to our Paterson location.

What should I expect BEFORE my MRI Exam?

Medications

It is important for you to keep to your regular medication schedule. Just let our staff know what medications you have taken prior to your MRI Exam.

Food and drink

You may eat or drink anything you like before a typical MRI test. If you are having your abdomen scanned it may be necessary for you to fast for a few hours before the test.

What to wear

For all MRI scans, you most likely will change into a hospital gown. There is a secure locker for your clothes. It is best, however, if you leave valuable items at home. If you are wearing anything metallic, such as jewelry, dentures, eyeglasses, or hearing aids that might interfere with the MRI scan, we will ask you to remove them. Credit cards, electronic devices, watches, and other metallic objects will not be permitted in the MRI scan room.

Intravenous preparation

Many of our patients receive a contrast agent intravenously (IV - in a vein in the arm) during their MRI scan in order to give a clearer picture of the area being scanned. If your doctor has determined that this procedure will enhance your MRI scan results, the technologist will place an IV in your arm.

What will I experience DURING my MRI Exam?

Scanning

Your technologist will bring you into the MRI scan room where you will lie down on the patient table. The technologist positions the part of your body to be scanned in the middle of the large cylindrical magnet. The scanner does not touch you, nor do you feel anything. Because the scanner does make a loud knocking noise when it takes the pictures, the technologist will offer you headphones to listen to music or earplugs to lessen the sound. The technologist leaves the room, but can see and hear you throughout the exam. It is important for you to lie very still and at some points, you may be asked to briefly hold your breath as the picture is taken.

Length of MRI exam

Each MRI scan is individualized and tailored to each patient's needs. If you've had a previous MRI exam, do not be concerned if this one is longer or shorter duration. After your preliminary scan, if you require a contrast medium, the technologist will bring you out of the magnet and inject the contrast into the IV placed in your arm. The technologist then returns you to your original position in the magnet to take additional images.

Contrast medium

Gadolinium is the contrast medium used in MRI Imaging to highlight your organs and blood vessels and help the radiologist to see them better. The incidence of reaction is extremely rare. In fact, most patients will feel nothing at all during or after the injection.

What should I expect AFTER my MRI Exam?

You have no restrictions after having a MRI exam and can go about your normal activities. To help eliminate the contrast medium from your body, remember to drink plenty of fluids.

MRI Exam Results

All MRI exams are read by our specially-trained radiologist. After the scan has been read, the results are sent to your physician, who will discuss them with you.

Additional Information and Resources

For further information on MRI click here .