

Adults having MRI arthrography

Introduction

This leaflet is for patients who will be having an MRI arthrogram of a joint.

What is an MRI?

MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) is a procedure which builds up pictures of the part of the body being looked at. An MRI is done by using a magnetic field and radio waves, together with an advanced computer system. A series of images are built up, each one showing a thin slice of the area being examined. These images are very detailed and show both bones and soft tissues in the body, giving us a great deal of information. Using the computer, the 'slices' can be looked at from any angle.

What is an MRI arthrogram?

An MRI arthrogram is an imaging procedure that gives a detailed picture of the joint spaces. An injection of a contrast material (dye) into the joint space allows all parts of the joint to be seen easily during an MRI scan.

Are there any risks?

An X-ray examination does carry certain risks but the length of time and level of X-rays are kept to a minimum.

As far as we know, MRI is a safe procedure. It does not involve the use of X-rays, but even so, MRI scans are not suitable for everyone. Radiographers have to be certain that you meet the safety standards before going into the MRI scanning room. You will be sent a safety questionnaire with your appointment letter. Please complete the questionnaire and send it to the address given on your appointment letter as soon as possible. There are no known risks of having an MRI scan if you meet the safety standards.

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Department

Radiology

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Patient Information

For female patients, if you are or might be pregnant, you must make sure the doctor referring you or a member of staff in the Radiology Department knows as soon as possible before you have your MRI.

MRI scans may not be advisable in early pregnancy, unless there are special circumstances. If you are breast feeding, please telephone the number on your appointment letter for advice.

Do I need to make any special preparations?

No.

Can I bring a relative or friend?

Yes, but for reasons of safety, they will be asked to stay in the waiting room. Only in special circumstances will they be allowed to go with you into the scanning room.

On arrival at the department

A member of staff will explain about the procedure. You will be shown to a private cubicle where you may be asked to take off your outer garments and remove jewellery (except your wedding ring).

You will also be asked to remove any cash, keys, credit cards and watches from your pockets. You may be asked to put on a hospital gown, but you can bring your own dressing gown if you would prefer.

Who will I see?

You will be cared for by a small team including a radiologist and radiographer who will carry out the examination.

What happens during the MRI arthrogram?

In an X-ray room the radiologist will clean the area over the joint which is going to be scanned. The skin will be numbed with a local anaesthetic (this may sting for a moment.) The radiologist will use X-ray fluoroscopy to place a needle into the joint and to watch the contrast material being injected into the joint. You will then be taken to the MRI suite for the rest of the examination.

**Patient
Information****Will the MRI scan be uncomfortable?**

Apart from the machine noise, which can be quite loud, you will not be aware of anything happening. Most patients do not mind lying still inside the scanner which is like a tube that is open at both ends. If this worries you, you should talk to a member of staff in the Radiology Department as soon as possible before your appointment.

You may have some mild discomfort or swelling of the joint following the examination.

How long will the MRI take?

The process of injecting the contrast dye and the MRI scan usually takes about 1 hour.

Are there any side effects?

It is best to rest the joint for 12 hours after the procedure. During this time, you can apply ice if you have any swelling of the joint.

Please arrange for someone to take you home as it is advisable not to drive.

Can I eat and drink afterwards?

Yes, you can eat and drink as normal.

When will I get the results?

After the scan, the images will be studied by the radiologist, who will then write a report and send it to the doctor who referred you. This normally takes up to 4 weeks.

**Patient
Information**

Contact information

If you have any questions or concerns about having the MRI scan, please contact the MRI appointments officer on the number shown on your appointment letter between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm, Monday to Friday.

We are pleased that we can offer state of the art technology for diagnosis, but radiology equipment needs constant updating and there is a charitable fund for this. If you would like to make a donation, please send a cheque to the address below. Cheques should be made payable to GHNHSFT.

Please send your donation to:

The Business Manager
 Department of Radiology
 Gloucestershire Royal Hospital
 Great Western Road
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Making a choice

Shared Decision Making

If you are asked to make a choice, you may have lots of questions that you want to ask. You may also want to talk over your options with your family or friends. It can help to write a list of the questions you want answered and take it to your appointment.



Ask 3 Questions

To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions if you are asked to make a choice about your healthcare.

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?

These resources have been adapted with kind permission from the MAGIC Programme, supported by the Health Foundation

* Ask 3 Questions is based on Shepherd HL, et al. Three questions that patients can ask to improve the quality of information physicians give about treatment options: A cross-over trial. Patient Education and Counselling, 2011;84: 379-85