

## WHAT TO EXPECT DURING YOUR MRI EXAM

The MRI examination does not hurt, but it can be a strange experience. Knowing what to expect during an MRI will make the experience itself less stressful.

### Getting Ready

- You will be asked to complete a questionnaire, which asks about any metal which you might have in your body, including screws, artificial joints, etc.
- You will be asked to take off anything metal, which includes any jewelry, watches, hair pins and bras.
- You will be asked to change into a two piece scrub outfit.
- The technologist will speak with you before entering the MRI room to go over the screening questionnaire you have just filled out. This is important for your safety. This is also a good time to ask any questions you may have.

### The Scanning Room

- You will be taken into the MRI room and asked to lie on the table, which is fairly narrow and hard, and slides out from the machine.
- If you are cold, please ask for a blanket.
- You will be given earplugs or head phones – it depends on which body part you are having scanned. (Headphones cannot be used with brain and spine exams).
- There are specific “cameras” or surface coils that must be placed on or around the body part that is being scanned. The technologist will try to immobilize you with positional sponges because any motion will cause blurring on the images, and may require starting the scan over. The technologist will inform you if you are moving.
- Breathing during the scan is acceptable (and preferred!) but you must lie very still and try your best not to move.
- Once you are comfortable, the technologist will slide the table into the machine before they leave the room. They can communicate with you throughout the exam. You will be given a bell, so if you need to speak immediately with the technologist, just squeeze it and an alarm will sound to the technologist. They will stop the scan promptly to speak with you.

### **The Scanning Begins**

- The machine itself makes a very loud banging or clanging sound for the duration of the examination. You may also experience some vibration. Each scan or sequence runs for about 2-5 minutes long. There will be a brief moment of silence in between each sequence.
- Each exam time is different. Most exams run for 20 minutes. Abdomen exams and others requiring a gadolinium injection may take up to 1 hour.
- Our radiologist will review the images and a report will be sent to the physician who ordered your exam usually within days. You should discuss the results with your referring physician. Technologists are not permitted to discuss any information regarding your imaging results.

### **What are the Risks involved with MRI?**

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) produces no known side effects from the magnetic fields or radio waves. This method of obtaining images of organs and tissues does not carry a risk of causing cancer as the machine does not contain harmful x-rays.

In most cases, an MRI exam is safe for patients with metal implants, except for a few types. Patients who have any metallic materials within the body must notify the technologist prior to the examination. Metallic chips, materials, surgical clips, or foreign material (artificial joints, metallic bone plates, or prosthetic devices, etc.) can significantly distort the images obtained by the MRI scanner.

Patients who have a heart pacemaker, brain aneurysm clips, metal debris in the eyeballs or fixed electronic implanted devices like neuro stimulators or cochlear implants cannot be scanned with an MRI because of the risk that the magnet may move the metal in these areas.

For your safety, absolutely **NO metal** objects are permitted inside the MRI scanning room. This includes keys, jewelry, watches coins, etc. You are entering a large magnetic field that cannot be turned off, and projectile objects pose a safety hazard. You will be given a change room with a lock to secure your personal items. Credit/bank cards will be erased if they are brought into the room.

The technologist will speak with you to ensure your safety before entering the scan room prior to every examination being conducted. Please inform them of any concerns you may have.