

Patient information

Information about your MRI Scan

(No prep)

If you are unable to keep this appointment, please let us know by calling Radiology appointments on **01284 712891**.

What is an MRI scan?

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) uses a very strong magnetic field and radio waves to produce images of the body. The MRI scanner is a large, hollow tube open at both ends that uses a large magnet, radio waves and computers to produce 2D and 3D images of the inside of your body.

The examination will involve several individual scans that are each usually a few minutes long. The radiographer will advise you of each length of scan before it starts. MRI does not use ionising radiation like x-rays; however, it is extremely important that strict safety checks are followed.

Why do I need this procedure?

Your doctor has referred you for an MRI scan to help make a diagnosis or to guide further treatment plans.

Where do I go for my MRI Scan?

Please read your appointment letter carefully to ensure you attend the correct MRI scanner. This will either be at:

- West Suffolk Hospital, Bury St Edmunds
- Community Diagnostic Centre (CDC), Newmarket

Is MRI Safe?

There are no known risks or side effects associated with MRI. Because of the magnets involved, MRI must not be performed on people with certain metal implants in their bodies.

With your appointment letter you will also have received a safety questionnaire.

It is very important that you fill this in before your appointment.

If you have any active implants listed below, please contact us before your appointment:

- Pacemaker
- Any Cardiac (heart) device including any heart valves.
- Cochlear (inner ear) implant
- Aneurysm clips
- Neuro stimulator
- Programmable shunt
- Any surgical clips

Have you ever had any incident where metal may have gone into your eyes?

It does not matter how long ago this happened; you must let us know before your appointment as it you will need to have an x-ray of your eyes to check that no metal is still in your eyes. If this is not checked it will not be safe for us to scan you.

The following devices can be affected by the MRI scanner as well as causing possible skin burns, so they will need to be removed before the scan:

- Glucose monitoring devices
- Pain patches
- Hormone patches

During the scan, the scanner is very noisy as it makes loud, knocking noises – this is normal. You will be provided with earplugs and headphones to protect your hearing.

Tattoos and make up.

Please do not wear mascara as this contains metal, or any lotions such as heat rubs. Some tattoos also contain metal that can occasionally heat-up during a scan. Please tell the radiographer immediately if you feel any heating or tingling sensations during the MRI.

How do I prepare for the procedure?

Please arrive 15 minutes before your appointment time. This will help us check your safety questionnaire and answer any questions you may have.

If you are pregnant, you must contact the department for further information before your appointment.

You may eat, drink, and continue to take any medication before your MRI scan. If you are having a scan of your abdomen (tummy), you may be asked to starve for four hours before your scan.

What happens when I arrive?

It is not advisable to bring children when you are attending your appointment. Staff are not legally able to look after them.

Please attend the **MRI Unit** where the receptionist will check your personal details.

You will be asked to change into a gown for the examination. You will be provided with a locker to keep all your belongings safe.

You will need to remove:

- Any piercings
- Jewellery
- Hairgrips
- Hearing aids
- Watches
- Dentures (metal) (head scans only)
- Glucose monitoring devices
- Pain patches
- Hormone patches

You will be taken into the MRI prep area where the radiographer will complete a further check of your safety questionnaire and answer any questions.

A radiographer will be performing your examination and will be supported by an imaging assistant. Both male and female staff work within the MRI unit.

How is the MRI scan performed?

Some scans require an injection of MRI contrast to help with the quality of the images. If this is the case, you will be asked to complete a contrast safety questionnaire to ensure it is safe to do so. We will check your kidney function before your appointment.

A cannula will be inserted into one of the veins in your arm either before or during the scan by the radiographer.

You will be taken into the MRI scanning room and asked to lie either on your back or your tummy depending on the scan.

The body part being scanned will be in the middle of the scanner and will have a rigid frame placed over it. This is used to detect the MRI signal and create the images.

You will be given headphones/ear plugs to wear to protect your ears from the noise of the scanner. The radiographer will be able to give you instructions through these. If you wish, music may also be played during your scan to help you relax.

You will also be given a buzzer so that you can speak to the radiographer at any point.

The radiographer will let you know when each scan will start and how long it will take. You may be asked to hold your breath for a moment if the scan requires this.

It is important that you lie very still during the scans.

Once the radiographer has checked the scans you will be able to leave the scanning room.

How long will the MRI scan take?

This will vary depending on the type of scan you have been referred for. They are usually between 15 – 45 minutes. The radiographer will advise you of this before the scan starts.

After the examination:

If you have had a contrast injection, you are required to stay in the department for 15 minutes after your scan and your cannula will then be removed.

You may then go home or back to work and continue with your daily activities.

Are there any risks or complications?

As with every medical procedure the risk must be compared to the benefit of having the procedure carried out. The doctor who requested the procedure will have considered this very carefully.

Very occasionally the contrast dye can result in side effects such as feeling sick, a skin rash, a headache and dizziness. These side effects are usually mild and don't last very long. You will remain in the department until these symptoms have resolved.

MRI and breast feeding

If you are breast feeding and have received an injection of contrast dye during the scan please speak to the radiographer as you may be required to make alternative arrangements for 24 hours after the scan.

When will I get my results?

Radiographers cannot give you the results of your scan but will inform you how long it will take for the results and how to obtain them.

Further Information:

- This NHS Trust is a teaching Trust and as part of their training it is necessary for students to observe examinations or complete the examination under the direct supervision of radiographer. If you do not wish for an observer to be present, please tell the receptionist on arrival.
- If you require the use of a hoist to transfer onto the examination couch you must contact the department in advance, failure to do so may result in your appointment being cancelled when you attend.

Feedback:

Please tell us about your experience following your appointment.

You can email PALS@wsh.nhs.uk or you can complete our survey using the weblink

<https://bit.ly/3U3803t> or the QR code below:



Data Protection information

West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust will manage your information in line with the General Data Protection Regulation 2018. The information you provide will be retained for the purposes of your healthcare. The information will be retained in line with the *NHS Records Management Code of Practice for Health & Social care*.

You have rights in relation to the way we process your information. If you no longer want us to use your information for the purposes specified above; if you want to request to have your information erased or rectified, please contact the Information Governance team on 01284 713454 or email info.gov@wsh.nhs.uk

We will review all requests in relation to your rights under GDPR, along with our responsibilities for record keeping.

Images may be used for research purposes as well as teaching. Patients must inform a member of staff if they do not consent to this.

As part of a shared service agreement with other NHS organisations, your radiology images and records may be shared with these other organisations as part of determining and providing your care. If you would like to know more about the extent of this sharing, or you wish us not to share at all with another organisation, or have any other concerns about it, please contact a member of staff.

Further information can be found at: [Protecting your information \(GDPR\) \(wsh.nhs.uk\)](#)

**If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities, please visit the website for AccessAble (formerly DisabledGo)
<https://www.accessable.co.uk>**



