

## Getting Ready for a Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) Exam

This handout explains what you can expect when you have an MRI exam. Our goal is to keep you safe and comfortable during the exam. We will get clear pictures so we can provide you with the best care. There are a few important things to know before you have the test.

### Safety Screening

The MRI scanner uses a strong magnet to take pictures of your body without the need for radiation. You will be asked a series of questions to make sure that you don't have metal in your body and make sure it is safe for you to have the MRI.

You must remove all piercings and jewelry before your MRI. This includes permanent jewelry. You will need to remove this even if you have had an MRI in the past where you kept them on. You will be asked to reschedule if not removed. You may also need to change into clothes that can be worn in the MRI scanner. We will provide these if needed. This is to make sure you are safe and to help us get the best pictures.

### Hearing Safety and Communication

The MRI machine makes loud noises during the scan. We will give you ear plugs or headphones to protect your hearing. Sometimes you may be able to listen to music through the headphones.

During the exam, you will need to lie on a table. While some MRI scans only last a few

minutes, others may require you to lie flat for 30-90 minutes. The MRI technologist will talk to you through a speaker, and they can hear you at all times during the exam. They will tell you that you can squeeze the ball that is placed in your hand if you need something. This will alert the technologist.

### Gadolinium

For many MRI exams, you will need to get an injection through your IV. This is a type of contrast that has gadolinium in it. Gadolinium is used to highlight blood vessels and other tissues of the body. This helps us to get better MRI pictures and to better detect diseases. All requests for gadolinium are reviewed by a doctor. They will decide which type of contrast is best for you.

We only need to use a small amount of contrast material (about 2-4 teaspoons). Most patients tolerate it well. Almost all the gadolinium is quickly flushed out by your kidneys and leaves your body through your urine. A tiny amount may stay in your body, but there are no known harmful effects from this.

### Questions

Ask our staff if you have any questions. We will take good care of you.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 9/2024 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#8078