

## What can my child expect during the MRI?

The MRI scanner looks like a big square box with a tunnel through the centre.

The radiographer will ask your child to lie down on a cushioned table. Foam cushions and soft straps are used to help keep your child still. A special frame, which looks a bit like a helmet, sits over the part of your child's body being scanned. Once your child is positioned comfortably the table will automatically move into the tunnel. It is very important that your child lies very still during the MRI as any movement will blur the pictures. The radiographer will leave the room and will be in constant contact with your child via an intercom.

When the MRI scan begins your child may hear some loud thumping and knocking sounds that will last for several minutes at a time. Headphones or ear plugs will be provided to protect your child's hearing. Your child may bring their favourite DVD to watch via MRI video goggles, or CD to listen to during their scan. Parents, who stay with their child in the MRI room will be provided with head phones to decrease the noise of the MRI scanner.

## What is intravenous contrast?

Intravenous contrast may be injected into your child's vein to provide more detail to the pictures. It is sometimes referred to as a dye but is a colourless liquid different to that used in X-ray and CT scans.

If an injection is necessary, anaesthetic cream will be put on to numb the area of skin where the needle is to be put in. Before using the

contrast an MRI staff member will discuss its use and possible side effects with you. Consent for administration of the contrast media must be signed by the parent or legal guardian.

## Can I stay with my child?

One parent / carer may accompany your child during the MRI provided special MRI safety precautions are met.

If you are pregnant, you may accompany your child into the MRI room but not stay with them during the MRI.

For a MRI requiring general anaesthesia, one parent / carer may accompany your child to the anaesthetic room. Once your child is asleep you will be escorted from the MRI suite.

**Siblings** - To ensure patient safety and preparation for MRI we recommend only 2 people accompany your child to Hospital. We suggest you make alternative arrangements for any other children on the day of your child's MRI.

## What happens if my child is frightened or can not lay still?

A general anaesthetic is often required for infants, some older children and adults who find the MRI tunnel and restraints frightening or have difficulty laying still.

Please contact your child's doctor or the MRI Department on (08) 8161 7447 if:

- > your child is claustrophobic
- > unsure your child will be able to keep still for the scan
- > unsure if your child is having a general

anaesthesia for MRI.

## Remove ALL the following items.

To prevent damage to your own, your child's belongings and the MRI scanner please make sure that the following items are removed:

- > Jewellery (including body piercing), watches
- > Hair clips, hair spray, make up
- > Spectacles, hearing aid, dentures
- > Clothing with metal zippers and studs
- > Keys, mobile phone, credit card, coins, pens

To do this is important for everyone's safety.

## If my child needs general anaesthesia (GA) for MRI

### Confirm admission

#### 3 working days before admission

Please phone: (08) 8161 7666, 9am to 4pm, Monday-Friday (except public holidays) to confirm your child's booking.

If you do not confirm the booking, your child's operation / procedure may not go ahead on the scheduled date.

### Fasting

Having food or drink in the stomach can be dangerous both during and after the anaesthetic, as stomach contents may enter the lungs. For this reason, the Hospital has general guidelines stating when children should stop eating and drinking.

#### Children older than 6 months of age:

Fast from food or milk for 6 hours.

Cordial or water may be given until 2 hours before the scheduled time of the procedure.

#### Babies less than 6 months of age:

Fast from breast milk or formula for 4 hours.

Sweet / clear fluids or water may be given until 2 hours before the procedure.

\*However, your child's circumstances may vary from this, and you will be specifically advised about fasting times before the day of MRI.

## If my child needs sedation for MRI

A nurse from medical imaging will contact you to discuss suitability and guidelines.

## Discharge times

Children are usually discharged 1-2 hours after their MRI. This may vary depending how well your child recovers from their anaesthetic and MRI.

Medical and nursing staff will explain your child's specific discharge care.

## Transport home

If you live further than one hour from the Hospital, you must make arrangements to stay in Adelaide overnight.

A Hospital bed can not be guaranteed.

Transport home should be by private vehicle or taxi. Public transport is not recommended.

## MRI results / report

Your child's MRI report will be sent to the doctor who requested the MRI by fax or mail within a few days.

## How long will the MRI take?

Approximately 30 - 90 minutes

## Can my child eat or drink?

Not if your child is scheduled for an MRI

- > under **general anaesthesia**. Please read the section: "If my child needs general anaesthesia(GA) for MRI"
- > under **sedation**. Please read the section "If my child needs sedation for MRI"
- > MRCP no food or drink 4 hours prior to MRI

For MRI scans without anaesthesia no fasting is required.

MRI Safety Questionnaire - it is compulsory to complete the MRI safety questionnaire before entering the MRI suite.

## What to bring:

- > Completed MRI Safety Questionnaire
- > Referral letter or request form
- > Medicare Card, Health Care Card or Private Health Fund Card
- > Private X-rays, CT, Ultrasound, MRI films relating to current condition. If unsure these will be of value, please bring them with your child.

**Consent** - Consent forms must be signed before your child's MRI. Only a parent or legal guardian can sign their consent.

## Car parking

We recommend arriving early for all appointments. Parking is available at the Kermode Street Car Park, opposite the Hospital and charges an hourly rate. Car parking for people with disabilities is available.

## For more information

**Women's and Children's Hospital  
Division of Medical Imaging**

**72 King William Road  
North Adelaide SA 5006**

**General enquiries, appointment  
bookings and changes to booking  
times**

**Phone: (08) 8161 7447**

**Fax: (08) 8161 7459**

**[www.wch.sa.gov.au](http://www.wch.sa.gov.au)**

The Women's and Children's Hospital is a smoke-free site.

Non-English speaking: for information in languages other than English, call the Interpreting and Translating Centre and ask them to call Department of Health. This service is available at no cost to you, contact (08) 8226 1990.

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Women's & Children's Hospital

# Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)

Information for  
parents & caregivers



## What is MRI?

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) is one of the latest diagnostic methods used to look inside the body without the use of X-rays. MRI is very useful for detecting abnormalities of the brain and spinal cord, blood vessels, joints and other internal organs. During MRI, pictures are taken from different angles and are processed by a computer to produce a detailed image of the specific part of the body scanned. MRI uses a large magnet, radio waves, antenna and a computer to obtain these images. The magnetic fields and radio waves are safe and no adverse health effects have been reported with normal use, providing ferro magnetic metals are kept away from the strong magnetic field.

## Where does my child go for MRI?

Division of Medical Imaging, 2nd floor, Rogerson Building.

For MRI under **general anaesthesia** please take your child to – Day of Surgery Admission (DOSA) Unit, 3rd floor, Reiger Building and please read the section: *'If my child needs general anaesthesia (GA) for MRI'*