

What is MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging)?



An MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) is a test that uses a powerful magnet, computer, and radio waves to take pictures inside your body (for example, muscles, organs, and bones). This helps your doctor find the cause of your illness.

An MRI is painless, and you do not receive any radiation.

Schedule Your MRI

Call any of the MRI Centers listed below to schedule your MRI test. The staff tells you if it is safe for you to have an MRI and where to go for the test.

Pacific Campus

Call: (415) 600-2940

Fax: (415) 885-8695

Address: 2351 Clay Street in the Stanford Bldg., 1st Floor (Ground Level), Room 100

Parking: 2405 Clay Street at Webster

California Campus

Call: (415) 600-2940

Fax: (415) 831-1037

Address: 3700 California Street, Lobby Level, Room G350

Parking: 460 Cherry Street at California

Davies Campus

Call: (415) 600-6840

Fax: (415) 600-6855

Address: Castro & Duboce Streets, South Tower, Level B

Parking: 45 Castro Street at Duboce

Note: Please tell the staff if you are pregnant, have a medical implant (such as a heart pacemaker or a cerebral aneurysm clip), metal fragments in your eye, or have had ear surgery.

Before Your MRI

- Your doctor gives you a referral form that tells the MRI Center what area of your body to scan. Bring this form to your appointment. Before your MRI, make sure your doctor's office faxes this form to the MRI Center where you have your test (see fax numbers on page 1).
- Please bring a list of all medicines you take.
- You may bring a family member or friend to be with you during the scan.

During Your MRI

- The MRI usually takes 30-60 minutes. This test does not cause discomfort or pain for most people.
- You remove all jewelry, glasses, hairpins, and hearing aids before your MRI.
- You also leave any metal or magnetic objects outside of the MRI scanning area. You may have an x-ray taken to check for any metal in your body.
- You lie comfortably on your back with support under your knees. You need to stay very still during the exam.
- You are put into the MRI scanner, which is a large, tube-shaped machine (see picture on page 1). The scanner has an “open” design which reduces the feeling of being “closed in.”
- The MRI scanner makes rapid, loud “knocking” sounds during scanning. You are offered earplugs for your comfort.

Note:

- If you have an MRI scan of the pelvis, a substance may be put into the muscle to improve the scan.
- If you have an MR Arthrogram, a liquid (called a *contrast*) is put into a vein within the joint being scanned. The contrast helps the doctor see the MRI more clearly.

Getting Your Test Results

Usually, the results are given to your primary (regular) doctor within 1 day of your test.

More Ways to Learn

Go to www.cpmc.org/learning and www.radiologyinfo.com.

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Note: This information is not meant to replace any information or personal medical advice which you get directly from your doctor(s). If you have any questions about this information, such as the risks or benefits of the treatment listed, please ask your doctor(s).