

# Information for adults having an MRI examination of their small bowel *(page 1 of 3)*

Please read this information leaflet very carefully.

If you are at all unsure about the examination or have any questions please telephone the department on 01722 429282.

## What is an MRI examination of the small bowel?

MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) is the name given to a technique which builds up images of the part of the body under investigation. In this case the small bowel, (which extends from the duodenal loop, just beyond the stomach to the ileo-caecal valve, just before the large intestine). The scan will help with diagnosing and treating your symptoms. The large machine looks like a tunnel about 4 feet long, the area of the body that is under investigation will be positioned so that it is in the centre of the tunnel.

## Are there any risks?

As far as is known, this is a safe procedure. It does not involve the use of X-rays. You are placed in a very powerful magnetic field and consequently the radiographers have certain safety guidelines that must be followed before allowing you into the scanning room. This includes a detailed safety questionnaire which you should fill in before you have your appointment, and post it back to the department.

MRI must NOT be done on patients with certain metal implants in their bodies such as pacemakers, cochlear implants, some surgical clips and some artificial heart valves.

## What if I am pregnant?

If you are, or think that you might be pregnant, please telephone the department as soon as possible. MRI scans are not advisable in pregnancy, unless there are special circumstances (see page 3).

## Is there any special preparation?

- **Yes, this is very important.** Please ensure that you have nothing to eat or drink for 2 hours before your examination. You can continue to take any medication as normal.
- Please wear loose fitting and comfortable clothes without metal fasteners.

If you need this information in another language or medium (audio, large print, etc) please contact Customer Care on 0800 374 208 or send an email to: [customer care@salisbury.nhs.uk](mailto:customer care@salisbury.nhs.uk)

You are entitled to a copy of any letter we write about you. Please ask if you want one when you come to the hospital.

If you are unhappy with the advice you have been given by your GP, consultant, or another healthcare professional, you may ask for a second (or further) opinion.

The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: [patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk) if you would like a reference list.

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- Please leave jewellery and metal valuables at home.
- Please arrive 45 minutes before your appointment time.

## What do I do when I arrive in the department?

Please report to the CT/MRI Scanner Reception in the Clinical Radiology Department on level 3, then take a seat in the reception waiting area. From here you will be collected by a member of the team who will check your details. The radiographer carrying out the examination will check through the safety questionnaire that you have completed and explain the procedure.

You will be given a drink of 1 litre of Mannitol which has to be drunk quickly over 45 minutes (approximately one cup every 6 minutes) This special drink highlights your bowel. When you have finished the drink you will be taken into the scanning room. You do not need to retain a full bladder for the scan so you can use the toilet as you need it.

## Who will I see?

A small team including a radiographer, a radiology department assistant and, possibly, a radiologist.

## What will happen during the examination?

A small plastic tube with a needle called a cannula will be placed in your arm to give you an injection of a muscle relaxant called Buscopan, and a contrast agent called Gadolinium. The Buscopan reduces the movement of your bowel so making the images clearer for a diagnosis to be made. Gadolinium is a colourless liquid that makes the blood vessels in your abdomen visible on the scan. The Gadolinium and Buscopan will be given at various stages of the scan.

You will be positioned on the couch in the MRI scanner so that the part of your body under investigation will be in the centre of the scanner. The scanner gets very noisy and you will be given either headphones or ear plugs to help reduce the noise. The radiographer responsible for your scan will be in the control room once you have been positioned correctly. The team will communicate with you either through headphones or via the intercom within the machine. You will also be given a buzzer to squeeze if you need one of them, and they will be watching you all the time. It is important to remain completely still whilst the scans are taking place otherwise the images become blurred. The scan will last approximately 40 – 60 minutes. During the scan you may be asked to hold your breath for 20 – 25 seconds while each image is being produced.

## Are there any side effects?

**Mannitol** The most common side effects are nausea and diarrhoea. Any symptoms should get better within 1-2 days following the examination.

**Buscopan** May make your mouth feel dry and you may notice that your vision becomes blurred. These effects usually disappear within half an hour, however, you should not drive home until your vision has returned to normal.

Rarely patients can develop a painful red eye which occurs within the 24 hours after the test. If this happens please attend the Accident and Emergency department at your nearest hospital. PLEASE REMEMBER THOUGH, THAT THIS IS EXTREMELY RARE.

**Gadolinium** Reactions are rare but the most common side effects are itching , nausea or vomiting. These are usually soon after the injection. Please inform the radiographer if you experience any of these symptoms.

## What happens after the MRI scan?

The cannula in your arm will be removed and you will be able leave the department when you are ready. You may eat and drink as usual and resume your normal activities.

As stated previously the Mannitol may cause you to have loose motions for a day or two.

## How will I get my results?

After the procedure the images will be reviewed by a radiologist, who will write a report on the examination. This will be sent to the doctor who referred you for the examination, and will take between 3 and 7 days.

## Information for female patients of childbearing age

If you have reason to believe that you may be pregnant please inform the department using the telephone number on the front page of this leaflet before attending for your appointment.

**Pregnancy** To date there have been no reported effects from MRI on the unborn child. As a precaution we advise against scanning in the first trimester.

**Breast feeding** If you are breastfeeding we advise that you do not breast feed for 24 hours after receiving the contrast dye (Gadolinium), as a precaution. We also advise that you express and discard the breast milk during this time.

## If I have a question about the examination?

If you have any questions about the examination please ring the number below between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Clinical Radiology: 01722 429282