

Coming for an MRI scan of the breast

Information for patients



Please read this information carefully (even if you have had an MRI scan before) as it includes important information about your scan, if you do not follow the instructions below we may not be able to complete your scan.

Before your appointment

MRI uses strong magnets to take detailed pictures of the inside of your body. Because of these strong magnets if you have certain implants or certain metal objects in your body, you may not be able to have a scan, or you may require extra safety checks before scanning.

Please contact us using the number on your appointment letter if you have any of the following, even if you have been told you can have MRI scans or have had previous MRI scans with the implant in place:

- Pacemaker or implanted defibrillator.
- Surgical clips in your head.
- Ever had a metal fragment enter your eye or head, even if you think it has been removed.
- Hearing devices implanted into the head and ear (normal hearing aids are ok).
- Implanted electronic devices (such as spinal cord or nerve stimulators. Even if you have had them removed).
- Any extendible bone device (such as a leg lengthening device).

- Any implants where a magnet is used to access a port for injections (such as a gastric band).
- Any implant with an electronic programmer.
- Shunts that can be programmed (fixed pressure shunts are ok).
- If you have or are due to have any surgical or endoscopic procedures within six weeks prior to your MRI appointment.
- If you are pregnant.

Note for patients with wearable glucose monitors

Most manufacturers advise removing glucose monitors prior to having an MRI scan, although the monitor poses no risk to you during the scan the magnet may damage the device. We therefore advise that you have a replacement sensor patch available prior to your scan.

Accessibility

All our departments are fully accessible, and staff fully trained in helping patients who need extra assistance to transfer from a wheelchair to the scanner, but if you require a hoist to transfer from a wheelchair, please ring the number on your letter so we can make sure your scan is booked on one of our scanners with access to suitable equipment.

What is an MRI scan?

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) uses strong magnetic fields and radio waves to produce detailed images of the inside of your body. MRI does not use any ionising radiation and most patients tolerate the scan very well.

MRI is commonly used for imaging the breast for patients who have:

- A breast cancer and further information is required to help plan surgical treatment.
- Women with gene mutations that make them more susceptible to breast cancer, or younger patients with strong family history of breast cancer where mammographic screening may not be suitable.
- Patients who have breast implants where there is concern that the implant may be damaged.
- Patients who have had an ultrasound or mammogram that has not been able to conclusively make a diagnosis and more information is needed.
- Patients who are having chemotherapy before surgery (known as neoadjuvant chemotherapy), MRI is used to assess how well the chemotherapy is working.



Preparation

There is no need to stop taking any medications before the scan and you may eat and drink as normal.

Before your scan you will be asked to remove any loose metal objects, watches, credit cards, money or electronic devices, for security reasons we advise that you leave any valuables at home. If there is any metal on your clothing near to where we are scanning you may be asked to remove the item of clothing, a gown will be provided. It is recommended to bring loose fitting comfortable clothes.

It's important that you do not come to your appointment with wearable weights or wearable magnets. If you use cosmetics with magnetic substances (such as magnet attached eye lashes) please make sure you do not wear these on the day of your scan and make sure any previously applied make-up is fully removed.

What will happen during my examination?

You will be asked to complete a safety questionnaire prior to entering the department (staff are available to help if you require). For your own safety it is important to complete this form as accurately as possible.

For most scans of the breast, we need to give you an injection of a special dye (known as a contrast agent). A small plastic tube called a cannula will be placed in your hand or arm and remain in place for the duration of the scan (please note if you have a line already implanted such as a PICC line, Hickman line or port we still advise a cannula. This is because we inject the contrast relatively fast, and there is a small chance this will

disrupt your line. If you still wish us to use the implanted line, please contact us before your appointment so we can ensure a suitable trained member of staff is available to access the line).

Once you are ready for the scan you will be taken into the room by the team, you will have the examination explained and, in some cases, we apply an oil capsule to the nipples so that they are easily identified on the images.



You will be asked to lie on your front with your head down, or to one side, on a special table that gets very detailed images of the breast. We will ensure you are as comfortable as possible before starting the scan. You will be given some headphones to wear during the scan and you will be given a buzzer that you can press if you want the scan to stop.

You will then be placed into the MRI scanner; this is a wide tube. During the scan the MRI machine will make a loud noise, this is normal.

The scan will take approximately 25 minutes and you must stay very still for the duration. If you think you may not be able to stay still, please speak to the Radiographer before the scan. Once the scan is finished you can leave once the cannula has been removed.

Modern MRI scanners are very well tolerated by patients but if you suffer from claustrophobia then please let the team know when you arrive for your scan, and they will help talk you through the procedure. Please note the MRI department is not able to prescribe sedatives.

We attempt to stay on-time; however, the MRI service also provides imaging for the emergency department and wards. We sometimes have to accommodate very ill patients, and this can delay the list. Please give at least two hours for your appointment.

How will I receive the results?

The scan will be reported by a Radiologist and the results will be sent to the person who requested your scan. If you have not had a result after four weeks, please contact your referrer. Radiology cannot give results directly to patients.

Childcare – Under 16 years of age

The Trust is unable to take responsibility to look after children under the age of 16 and your children cannot enter the scan room. We request that parents or carers find alternative childcare arrangements during their Radiology appointments. If you bring children with you, they must be accompanied by someone 16 years or older. Failure to follow this request will result in your appointment being rearranged.

Gender diversity

During your appointment you will be asked about the biological sex you were at birth. This information will ensure we can safely perform the examination and may also assist with your diagnosis. All disclosed information will remain confidential.

Transport

If you require and are entitled to hospital transport, then please note this has *not* been booked. To book transport please ring **0300 330 2000**. Please note that if your appointment is booked on an evening or weekend this means we have not been told you require transport and these times might fall outside of the transport services operating times, so please contact the department using the number on your letter to check that your appointment time is appropriate.



What did you think of your care?

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