

Magnetic Resonance Imaging: MRI

(without sedation)

Preparation for Children and their Families



THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO
MEDICINE

Comer Children's Hospital
AT THE FOREFRONT OF **KIDS** MEDICINE™

What is an MRI?

An MRI is a special way to take pictures of the inside of your child's body using a machine with a large magnet. The MRI machine looks like a tunnel. There is a light inside so your child can see, and a microphone and speaker so the technologist taking the pictures can talk to your child.

What Will Happen During the MRI?

- Your child will lie on a special bed that moves into a round tunnel. Some children go into the MRI machine head first, others feet first depending on what part of your child's body is being examined.
- It is important for your child to be still (like a statue) during the MRI to get clear sets of pictures. Each set of pictures may take several minutes to be made. If your child is unable to lie completely still during the MRI, medical staff will be available to discuss other options for completing the exam.
- The MRI machine makes loud noises (like knocking) but never touches your child. Your child will wear ear plugs and head phones.
- If your child is having pictures taken of his/her head, or if your child is able to watch a movie, your child will wear something over his/her head like a helmet .
- The MRI usually last anywhere from 30-90 minutes (different pictures take different amounts of time). The technologist or sedation nurse will tell you how long your child's MRI should take.
- It may be possible for one caregiver to stay in the room with your child during the scan. Ask the technologist if this is okay.
- Some children need IV medicine called "contrast" for their pictures. An IV is a tiny tube that the nurse will put into your child's hand or arm if contrast is needed. Ask your doctor if an IV is needed for your child's pictures.
- If your child needs an IV for the pictures, he/she can expect the following:
 - A stretchy rubber band (called a "tourniquet") will be tied on your child's arm to help the nurses look for a vein (or blue line under the skin). This rubber band feels like a tight hug on the arm.
 - A soft, wet wipe to clean your child's skin.
 - Special "freezy" spray. This spray feels very cold but helps make the pinch easier.
 - A small needle to put a tiny tube into your child's vein. Remember the cold spray will help make this easier and the needle will come out right away.
 - Sticky tape to hold the small plastic tube in place after the needle comes out.
- Your child can choose to look or look away during the I.V. Some kids like to hold someone's hand or play with a toy.

Helpful Information before your MRI:

• Your child will be asked to remove anything with metal before going into the MRI room including:

- Clothing with zippers and snaps
- Glitter or rhinestones
- Eyeglasses
- Belts
- Electronic items including cell phones, iPods...



• If your child chooses to wear clothing from home without any metal, he/she may keep his/her own clothes on during the MRI.

• The room often feels cold. You can bring a favorite blanket from home for your child or we can provide a warm blanket when you arrive.

• Some kids may be able to watch a movie or listen to music during the MRI. Ask the technologist if this is possible. Your child can bring favorite music (iPod, laptop, CD) or a DVD from home so the technologist can play it for him/her.

• Some kids prefer to close their eyes and think of their favorite place during their MRI.

What Will Happen After the MRI:

• If your child has an IV, it will be removed. Your child will feel pressure with gauze before a band-aid is placed on your child's arm.

• Your child's doctor will receive results and contact you within 24 hours of the scan.

• Your child can resume normal activity, unless he/she was sedated.

General Preparation Guidelines Based on Age:

• Research shows that children who are prepared in advance are less anxious and better able to cooperate during medical exams and procedures.

• You can help your child feel prepared by answering questions using clear and honest answers based on the detail provided here.

• We recognize that all children are individuals. You know your child best and can use this information as a guideline when preparing him/her.

Child's Age:

2 years

3-5 years

6-10 years

11 and older

When to Prepare Your Child:

On the way to your appointment

The day before your appointment

A few days before

Approximately a week or two prior