

MRI Scanning

Information for patients



What is MRI and how does it work?

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) is a technique using a large magnet, radio waves, and a computer to obtain images of the body. It does not use any form of X-rays and although stronger than the earth's magnetic field, it is considered to be completely safe.

How should I prepare for my MRI scan?

Please complete the MRI Patient Safety Screening Questionnaire, enclosed with your appointment letter, before your appointment and contact the department if you have answered 'Yes' to any of the first 9 questions or if you weigh more than 30 stone (190Kg). The phone number for the MRI department where your MRI scan will take place is on your appointment letter.

You will be asked to remove all objects such as watches, certain jewellery/piercings, keys, coins, credit cards, hairgrips, etc. (A locker will be provided). You will also be asked to undress and put on a hospital gown/scrubs to ensure that there are no metal zips, buttons, etc. that could affect the image quality.

Please do not wear any makeup. Contact lenses may have to be removed before the scan.

You are strongly advised not to bring any articles of value into the Hospital.

NHS Lothian cannot accept any responsibility for personal effects.

What happens before my scan?

Not everyone is suitable for MRI so the radiographer will review your MRI Patient Safety Screening Questionnaire with you to ensure you are safe to enter the scan room. As the MRI scanner uses a very strong magnet, you **MUST** let us know if you have a cardiac pacemaker, other electronic implants, a history of previous brain surgery, cochlear implants, or if you have a history of metal in your eyes.

You may need to have an injection of MRI contrast in your arm during your scan. If so, the radiographer will explain this and ask if you have any allergies or any known problems with your kidney function.

Some scans of your abdomen, pelvis, kidneys, bowel or heart may require you to be given medication to help us to see these areas more clearly. If this is required, the radiographer will explain this to you before the scan and will ask other questions about your medical history to make sure it is safe for you to have this.

What will the MRI scan involve?

The radiographer will ask you to lie on the scanning table. A device containing a receiver coil may be placed around the part of the body being examined and you will then be positioned within the magnet.

During the scan you will feel nothing but you will hear the scanner working. The scanner is very noisy and you will be given headphones and/or earplugs to wear.

For some scans, we can play music through the headphones and some scanners have a TV screen you can watch moving scenery or a video. The radiographer can see you throughout the scan and can talk to you through a two-way intercom.

It is very important that you keep still during the scan to produce good quality images. You will be given a buzzer to squeeze which sounds an alarm if you feel uncomfortable at any time. You will be monitored by the radiographer at all times.

How long will the scan take?

Most scans take between 20–60 minutes depending on which part of the body is being scanned. We will let you know what to expect before the scan.

What happens after the scan?

Once your scan is complete and the images have been checked you will be told you are free to leave the department.

How will I get my results?

Following your MRI scan, the images are looked at and examined by a radiologist. The radiologist will then contact the person who referred you for the scan (this may be your GP or a hospital specialist) who will contact you with the results. You will be told how long it is likely for the results to be available at your MRI appointment.

The results are **not** available directly from the MRI department.

Keeping your appointment

If your appointment is unsuitable or is no longer required, please change or cancel it by phoning the number on your appointment letter. Your call will give someone else the chance to be seen and will help us keep waiting times to a minimum.

Public transport and travel information

Bus details available from:

- Lothian Buses on 0131 555 6363 www.lothianbuses.co.uk
- Traveline Scotland on 08712002233 or www.travelinescotland.com
- Train details available from: National Rail Enquiries on 03457 484 950 or <https://www.nationalrail.co.uk/>

Patient Transport

Patient Transport is only available if you have a medical/clinical need. Telephone 0300 123 6 1236* (calls charged at local rate) up to 28 days in advance to book, making sure you have your CHI Number available, which is printed on your appointment letter.

Hard of hearing or speech Impaired? Use text relay: 18001-0300 123 1236* (calls charged at local rate). To cancel patient transport, telephone: 0800 389 1333 (Freephone 24 hr answer service).

Parking

A separate map and sheet containing site specific parking arrangements is included with your appointment letter, including how to book proximity/disabled parking.

Useful links

You may find the following websites helpful for their description of common radiology examinations:

NHS Lothian Radiology – Coming for a scan

<https://services.nhsllothian.scot/radiology/coming-for-a-scan/>



NHS – MRI Information

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/mri-scan/>



What should I do now?	✓
Check your appointment time and date are suitable (please take care to check if your appointment is in the morning or in the evening – some scanning lists start early and finish late in the evening)	
Complete your MRI Patient Safety Screening Questionnaire and bring this with you to your appointment	
Please check your appointment letter for which MRI scanner your appointment is booked. There are several MRI scanners in NHS Lothian; your appointment may be at a different site to any previous MRI scans.	

Making a complaint / giving feedback

If you would like to make a complaint or give feedback about the service that you have received, please contact the NHS Lothian Patient Experience Team. You can do this via a number of routes, including:

- In writing
- By telephone
- By email

Where possible, it would be helpful if you can provide the following information:

- Are you the patient (yes or no)? If no, please give your name and relationship to the patient
- Patient's name
- Patient's postal address including post code
- Your email address, if you have one
- Telephone number
- Patient's date of birth
- Description of the complaint that you are making
- Location where this occurred
- Date when this occurred.

Please include your contact details (a postal address, email or telephone number) so that we can contact you if we need any further information and details.

Telephone: 0131 536 3370 (9am - 2pm)

Email: LOTH.feedback@nhs.scot

Address:

Mainpoint
102 Westport
Edinburgh
EH3 9DN