



MRI Patient Preparation Guide

A clear, step-by-step guide to help you prepare safely and comfortably for your MRI scan.

What to Expect

- MRI uses a strong magnet and radio waves to make detailed pictures. There is no ionizing (x-ray) radiation.
- Scans typically take 15–90 minutes depending on the body part and number of images.
- You will hear loud tapping/knocking sounds. Ear protection is provided. You can communicate with the technologist at all times.

(1) A Few Days Before Your Appointment

- **Complete the MRI safety questionnaire** and inform us about any implants, devices, or prior surgeries.
- **Collect device/implant information** (cards or model numbers) for pacemakers/ICDs, neurostimulators, insulin or drug pumps, cochlear implants, stents, filters, or any metal fragments/bullets.
- **Pregnancy & breastfeeding:** Please tell us if you are pregnant or think you might be. Breastfeeding can usually continue even if contrast is used.
- **Kidney problems or dialysis:** let us know—some contrast exams may require recent kidney function (eGFR) results.
- **Claustrophobia/anxiety:** options include relaxation techniques, a support person (if screened), mild sedation, or open MRI (where available). Discuss in advance if you are concerned.

(2) On the Day of Your MRI

- **Arrive 15–30 minutes early** for screening and changing.
- **Clothing:** You'll be asked to change into a gown. Avoid metal in clothing (zippers, snaps, metallic threads), and remove all jewelry, hairpins, piercings, watches, hearing aids, removable dental work, and credit cards.
- **Cosmetics & patches:** Remove makeup with metallic pigments (eyeliner/eye shadow), certain nail polishes, magnetic eyelashes/eyeliner, and any transdermal patches with metallic backings. Bring a replacement patch if one is removed.
- **Eating & medicines:** Unless you were given specific instructions, eat and take your regular medicines as usual. Some abdominal/pelvic MRIs may require up to 4 hours of fasting—follow the instructions on your appointment letter.

- **If you are scheduled with sedation:** follow fasting instructions (generally 6 hours for solid food; clear liquids allowed up to 2 hours before). You must have an adult escort to take you home.

(3) Implants, Devices, and Metal Safety

- Tell us about all implants/devices: pacemakers/ICDs, cochlear implants, neurostimulators, programmable shunts, medication pumps (insulin, pain), stents, filters, clips (especially brain aneurysm clips), prosthetic joints, and any bullets or shrapnel.
- Bring device cards. Many devices are labeled MR Safe, MR Conditional, or MR Unsafe. We must know the exact make/model to scan safely.
- If you have ever done metal grinding/welding or had a metal-on-metal eye injury, tell us. You may need an orbit X-ray before MRI to rule out tiny metal fragments.

(4) If Your Exam Needs Contrast (Gadolinium)

- Contrast helps certain tissues show more clearly. Reactions are uncommon. Tell us about any prior reaction to contrast or allergies.
- Kidney problems: modern agents are very low risk, but patients with severe kidney failure or on dialysis require extra assessment.
- Pregnancy: we avoid routine gadolinium during pregnancy unless the benefits clearly outweigh the risks.
- Breastfeeding: continuing to breastfeed is considered safe after gadolinium. If you prefer, you may express and store milk ahead of time.

(5) During the Scan

- You'll lie on a padded table that moves into the scanner. The technologist can see and hear you and will speak to you during the exam.
- You'll receive earplugs or headphones. Try to relax, breathe normally, and keep very still. For some scans you may be asked to briefly hold your breath.
- A call button is provided—press it any time if you need assistance.

(6) After the Scan

- Most people can resume normal activities right away.
- If contrast was used, drink water through the day unless your doctor told you otherwise.
- If you received sedation, do not drive, drink alcohol, operate machinery, or sign important documents for 24 hours, and have an adult stay with you.
- Contact us or seek medical help if you develop a rash, breathing trouble, severe headache, or feel unwell after the scan.

What to Bring

- Photo ID and insurance details (if applicable).
- Referral/appointment letter and any prior imaging reports/discs.
- Device/implant cards and medication list.

- A list of allergies and medical conditions.
- Comfort items for children (toy/blanket) if a child is being scanned.

Important

Always follow the instructions provided to you by Images Diagnostic Center staff for your specific exam. If they differ from this guide, our center's instructions take priority.