MRI: Abdomen Scan

How to prepare and what to expect

This handout explains how an MRI scan of the abdomen works, how to prepare, what to expect during the scan, and how to get your results.

What is an MRI scan?

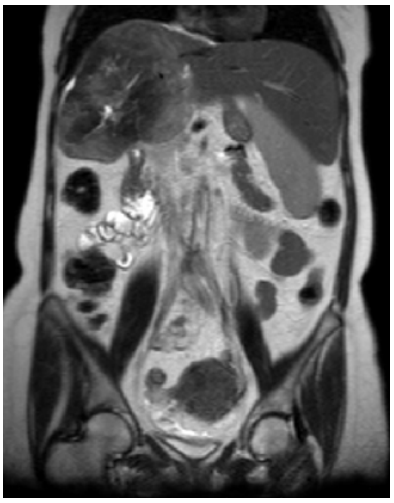
MRI stands for *magnetic resonance imaging.* MRI uses a powerful magnetic field, radio frequency pulses, and a computer to produce detailed pictures of organs, soft tissues (muscles and nerves), bones, and other internal body parts. MRI will help your healthcare provider decide which treatment is best for your health condition.

MRI Screening

Because the strong MRI magnet will pull on certain metals or implants, we need to know if you have any metal on or in your body. We also need to know certain things about your health.

To keep you safe and to prevent a delay or cancellation of your exam, it is important to tell your team coordinator and MRI department if you have **any** of the following:

- Pacemaker or defibrillator
- Cerebral (brain) aneurysm clip
- Cochlear or ear implant
- Orthopedic hardware or metal in the area we are scanning
- Implanted or external drug pump (including chemotherapy)
- Breast tissue expander
- Bullet or shrapnel in your body
- Neurostimulator
- Dialysis or renal failure
- Allergy to gadolinium
- Continuous glucose monitor (CGM)
- Medication patches
- Penile implant
- Programmable shunt
- Tattoos placed within 2 weeks of your MRI appointment



An MRI image of the abdomen

UWMC Imaging Services | Box 357115
1959 N.E. Pacific St., Seattle, WA 98195 | 206.598.5800

How do I prepare?

- Please talk with your referring provider if you have any concerns about managing pain or anxiety during your MRI scan.
- Tell your provider if you are pregnant, or if there is any chance you could be pregnant.

If your scan is in the morning: The evening before your scan, have a light dinner, such as eggs or a sandwich. Do **not** eat breakfast on the morning of your scan.

If your scan is in the afternoon: On the morning of your scan, have a light breakfast, such as an egg and toast, or cereal. Do **not** eat lunch.

On the Day of Your Scan

- Starting **6 hours** before your scan time, do **not** eat any solid food.
  - It is OK to drink liquids that do not contain caffeine, milk, or chocolate up to 1 hour before your scan.
- Starting **1 hour** before your scan time, do **not** eat or drink anything.

What happens during your MRI appointment?

Before Your Exam

- You will fill out an "MRI Patient Screening Form." This form asks questions about your health and medical devices.
- We will give you a hospital gown and pants to change into.
- You must remove jewelry and metal hair products.

During Your Exam

- You will lie on a sliding table. The technologist will help you get into position and then leave the room to take the images.
- You will be able to talk with the technologist through an intercom.
- The scan usually takes 30 to 45 minutes.
- We will ask you to hold very still as each picture is taken. We may also ask you to hold your breath for many of the scans.
- Sometimes, an injection of contrast is used to make certain tissues or blood vessels easier to see. You may feel discomfort or coolness at the injection site.
- You may feel warmth in the area where the images are taken. This is normal. If it bothers you, please tell the MRI technologist.
- You will hear loud tapping or knocking noises during the scan. We will give you earplugs and headphones with music to help block some of these sounds.

Who interprets the results and how do I get them?

- An MRI radiologist will review and interpret your MRI images. This radiologist will not talk with you about the results, but they will send a report to your primary care or referring provider. This provider will give you the results.
- You and your provider will then decide on the next step, such as treatment for a problem, as needed.
- You may also read your results on your MyChart page.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

- ❑ Harborview Imaging Services: 206.744.3105
- ❑ FHCC Imaging Services: 206.606.1434
- ❑ UWMC - Montlake Imaging Services: 206.598.5800
- ❑ UWMC - Northwest Imaging Services: 206.598.5800

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