

MRI: Enterography Scan

What to expect and how to prepare

This handout is for patients having an MRI enterography scan at UW Medical Center - Montlake. It explains what to expect and how to prepare.

What is MRI?

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) is a way to take pictures of the organs and tissues inside your body. MRI uses radio waves and a strong magnet to provide clear and detailed pictures.

What is an MRI enterography scan?

An MRI *enterography* scan helps us see detailed pictures of your small intestine. This scan can show areas of inflammation (swelling and irritation), bleeding, and other problems.

MRI enterography will help your healthcare provider decide which treatment is best for your health condition.

Most MRIs involve taking at least 2 sets of pictures. Each set lasts 2 to 15 minutes and shows a different part of your small intestine and the tissues around it.

For Your Safety

Health Review

We need to know about certain **health conditions** before giving you an MRI scan. Please tell us if you:

- Have any problems with your liver or kidneys
- Need a liver or kidney transplant
- Are on dialysis
- Have had any surgeries
- Have allergies to any drugs or *contrast* (X-ray dye)
- Are taking *anticoagulant* (blood-thinning) drugs



An MRI image of the small intestine.

Screening for Metal

We also need to know if you have any **metal in or on your body** before we give you an MRI scan.

The MRI magnets will pull on any *ferromagnetic* object, such as iron and some other metals. Please tell MRI staff if you have:

- Aneurysm clips, heart pacemaker, artificial heart valve, implanted port, infusion catheter (such as Port-o-cath, Infusaport, or Lifeport), intrauterine device (IUD), prosthetic hip, plates, clips, pins, or screws, surgical staples, or any other implanted metal object
 - Most surgical staples, clips, plates, pins, and screws are not a risk during MRI if you have had them for more than 4 to 6 weeks. If needed, we may do an X-ray to check for metal.
- Tattoos or permanent eyeliner
- Medicine patches
- A bullet or shrapnel in your body
- Ever worked with metal
- Tooth fillings or braces
 - Dental work is not usually affected by the MRI, but fillings and braces may affect pictures of the face or brain.

How do I prepare?

- Please talk with your referring provider if you have any concerns about managing pain or anxiety during your MRI scan.
- *If you were assigned female at birth:* Tell your provider if you are pregnant or breastfeeding, or if there is any chance you could be pregnant.
- If you take iron medicines or supplements, you **must** stop taking them 48 hours before your scan. Please talk with the provider who prescribed them if you have concerns.
- 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.

- Take your regular medicines.
- 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.

What should I expect?

Before Your Scan

- **Remove any items that might contain metal.** These include:
 - Makeup and nail polish
 - Hairpins
 - Jewelry
 - Glasses, hearing aids, and any removable dental work
- When you arrive at the Radiology department, the MRI technologist will explain the scan to you. You will then change into a hospital gown.
- *If you were assigned female at birth:* Tell your technologist if there is any chance you could be pregnant.
- If you have an insulin pump or a patch that delivers any type of drug, we will ask you to remove it before your scan.
- The technologist will give you contrast liquid to drink. You will drink it over the course of the next hour.

During the Scan

- You will need to lie very still on a sliding table. The technologist will help get you into position.
- We will give you medicine that will reduce motion in your bowels for a short time. This allows us to get the best pictures.
- We will place a piece of equipment called a *torso coil* on your belly.
- The technologist will give you breathing instructions. Please closely follow these instructions for the best imaging results.
- The technologist will slide the table inside the MRI unit and then leave the room to take the MRI pictures.
- You will be able to talk with the technologist through an intercom.
- An injection of a contrast may be used to make certain tissues or blood vessels easier to see. If you need the contrast for your scan:
 - Your doctor will talk with you about it before your scan.

- You will receive the injection about halfway through the scan.
- It will be injected through a small needle and an *intravenous* (IV) line in your arm or hand vein.
- The full scan will take 30 to 40 minutes.
- After the scan is done, we will remove the torso coil.

What will I feel during the MRI?

- MRI is not painful.
- Some patients may feel confined or uneasy (*claustrophobic*) when they are inside the MRI unit. Please tell the doctor who referred you for the MRI if you are claustrophobic. Your doctor may give you medicine to help you relax during your scan.
- You may feel warmth in the area where the pictures 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 provide earplugs or headphones with music to help block some of these sounds.

After the Scan

- Drink plenty of fluids the rest of the day to help flush the contrast out of your body. Try to drink 6 to 8 glasses of fluid.
- **If an oral anti-bowel medicine was used for your MRI:** Do **not** drive for 4 hours after your exam. To get home after your scan, you can:
 - Have someone drive you
 - Take a bus, taxi, or shuttle
 - Walk

Questions?

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

- ☐ UWMC - Montlake Imaging Services: 206.598.6200
- ☐ UWMC - Northwest Imaging Services: 206.668.5777
- ☐ HMC Imaging Services: 206.744.3105

Who interprets the results and how do I get them?

A radiologist who specializes in MRI will review and interpret your MRI images. The radiologist will not talk with you about the results, but will send a report to your primary care or referring provider. Your own provider will give you the results.

You and your provider will then decide the next step, such as treatment for a problem, as needed.

You may also read your results on your MyChart page. If you need copies of your images on disc, call 206.598.6206.