

# Having an MRI scan of your breast

Radiology Department

Information for Patients

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## Introduction

This leaflet tells you about having a breast MRI scan. It tells you how to book your scan, how to get ready and what will happen on the day. It is best to have your breast MRI scan done between **day 7 and day 14** of your menstrual cycle. This is because hormonal breast changes can affect images. This is not always needed. MRI staff can say what is right for you.

## How to book your breast MRI scan:

- **Please read your pre-appointment letter and this leaflet carefully.**
- **You must call us to book your scan.** The number to call is on your pre- appointment letter.

## Important safety information

**You must tell us, by calling the number on your appointment letter if you:**

- have a pacemaker or internal defibrillator.
- have ever had any metal fragments in your eyes.
- have any implants or surgical clips in your body or head.
- have ever had an operation on your head, eyes, ears, heart or chest.
- have ever had a GI pill video capsule (capsule endoscopy) that did not pass through.
- think there is any chance that you might be pregnant.
- have had an operation in the last 6 weeks.
- have a cochlear implant for your hearing.
- are breastfeeding.

**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit [www.uhleicester.nhs.uk](http://www.uhleicester.nhs.uk) for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals.  
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact [uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net](mailto:uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net)

## What is a breast MRI scan?

An MRI scanner is a large tube with a strong magnet. An MRI scan uses the magnet and a computer to make detailed pictures of any part of the body. An MRI scan does not use X-rays, unlike a mammogram.

You may need to have an injection of a colourless liquid (contrast) into a vein. Contrast shows up on the MRI scan. We will talk to you about this at the time if it is needed. If your scan is to check a breast implant, you will not normally need an injection of contrast.

## Why do I need a breast MRI scan?

We do this scan if we need more detailed pictures of your breast tissue. It may be that we could not get enough information from the usual tests.

We use breast MRI scans for:

- Checking for problems with a breast implant
- Looking at complex breast problems or certain breast cancers
- Some women who have a higher risk of breast cancer whose breast tissue cannot be fully evaluated in the usual ways. In some of these women, breast awareness and an X-ray of the breast (mammogram) may not give enough useful information.
- Younger women at higher risk of breast cancer. MRI can show very small changes that may be signs of early cancer

## Does a breast MRI scan replace the need for a mammogram?

No. MRI scans do not show calcium deposits in the breast. These are a common sign of early cancer. However, this is seen very well on a mammogram.

A mammogram is still the best screening test for breast cancer, particularly in the older age group. These women will continue to get an appointment for a regular mammogram as well.

## How do I get ready for the scan?

**Safety questionnaire:** If we sent you a safety questionnaire with your appointment letter, please fill it in and bring it with you.

**What to wear:** It is helpful to wear clothes which do not have metal zips or clips.

**You can eat and drink as usual.**

**Medicine prescribed by your doctor should be taken as usual.**

**Please do not bring children with you.** Young children cannot be left alone when you are in the MRI scanner. Your scan may be cancelled if you come with young children.

If you have a fear of small spaces (claustrophobia) please tell us when you arrive. Most people who are anxious about the scan are able to manage it with support from our staff.

Before you go into the MRI scanner we will talk to you about your scan.

**Before the scan you will need to remove all loose metal objects, including:**

- watch, activity tracker, mobile phone, money, credit cards, keys, glasses
- all jewellery (including piercings). You can use plastic piercings instead, but please put these in before you come.
- hair clips and grips, wigs, hair pieces, weaves or extensions
- eye makeup, fake eyelashes
- sports clothing that has silver fibres in.
- stick-on drug patches. See instructions below.
- glucose monitors that are not safe to use in MRI scanner. See instructions below.

**If you have a drug patch on your skin:**

If you have a stick-on drug patch for pain medicine, hormones, nicotine or other medicine, you will need to take it off before your MRI scan. This is because the patch may warm up or get hot during the scan. This can change how much of the medicine your body gets.

Once a drug patch is taken off, you cannot stick it back on. If you need your drug patch all the time, please bring a new patch with you. You can put it on after your scan.

If a nurse puts your drug patch on you at home please tell them that you will need a new drug patch after your MRI appointment. They can then plan to visit you at home to put a new one on.

**If you have a glucose monitor and/ or an insulin pump on your skin:**

**If you use a glucose sensor** such as a flash monitor or continuous glucose monitor (CGM) on your skin, you may need to take it off for your MRI scan. It depends what type it is. Please bring a replacement with you. You can put it on after your scan. Or, you can call us to change your appointment so it ties in with when you are due to replace your sensor.

**If you have an insulin pump with tubing**, you will need to remove the pump before your scan. You can reattach the pump after your scan.

**If you have a patch pump**, such as an Omnipod, you will need to take the pod off for the scan. The Personal Diabetes Manager (PDM) must be kept outside of the room. You can bring a new pod to put on after the scan.

**What happens during a breast MRI scan?**

- When you get to the Radiology Department reception, we will direct you to the waiting area.
- We will ask you to change into a hospital gown and remove **all** of your jewellery.
- We will check your safety questionnaire. This is to make sure it is safe to do your scan.
- If you need to have a contrast injection for your scan, we will put a very thin plastic tube (cannula) into a vein in your arm. We inject the contrast during your scan. We will tell you when we do this.
- The scanner is noisy. We will offer you some earplugs to protect your ears from the noise.



- You will lie down on your tummy, with your breasts positioned for the scan. You will need to keep still during the scan, which takes about 45 minutes.

## What happens after the scan?

You can eat and drink as usual. You can return to your usual activity or work.

## How do I get the results?

You will not get the results straight away.

A doctor who specialises in medical imaging (radiologist) will look at your scan pictures. If you have had mammograms taken these will be reported at the same time.

The results will be sent to the specialist who wanted you to have the scan.

Some women may need further tests. This may be an ultrasound scan and possibly a needle test. Please make sure that you leave your phone number. This is so we can contact you and arrange any further tests at a time that works well for you.

## Are there any risks?

- The use of magnetic fields in an MRI scan is not thought to be harmful.
- There is small risk of side effects from the contrast. Symptoms are usually mild and may include itchy skin, pain at the injection site. You may feel sick (nausea) or be sick (vomiting). Headache and chest pain are rare. If you get any of these symptoms at the hospital, tell the doctor, nurse or other staff looking after you. If you start to get symptoms at home you should contact your GP or call the NHS Helpline on 111.

## What if I need to talk to someone?

**If you have any questions or concerns, or cannot make the appointment:**



Please call the Radiology department on **0116 258 8765** and select **option 2**. Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, but not on bank holidays.

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔  
على هذه المعلومات بلغةٍ أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل

જો તમને અસ્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email [uhl-tr.equalitymailbox@nhs.net](mailto:uhl-tr.equalitymailbox@nhs.net)