

Having an MRI scan of your breast

Department of Radiology

Information for Patients

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Introduction

This leaflet tells you about having a breast MRI scan, including how to book your scan, how to prepare for your scan and what will happen during your scan. A breast MRI scan should ideally be done on day 7 to 14 of your menstrual cycle, as hormonal breast changes can affect images. However, this is not always necessary and MRI staff will be able to advise you.

To arrange your breast MRI scan:

Please read your appointment letter and this leaflet carefully.

Please call us on the telephone number on your appointment letter to book your scan.

Important safety information

You must tell us, by calling the telephone 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.
- 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
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

What is a breast MRI scan?

An MRI is a type of scan which uses a powerful magnet and a computer to produce detailed images of any part of the body. An MRI scanner is a large tube that contains the powerful magnet.

The MRI scanner does not use X-rays, unlike a mammography.

You may need to have an injection of a contrast liquid into a vein. This is a colourless liquid that shows up on the MRI scan. If this is needed, we will explain this to you at the time. If your scan is to check a breast implant, you will not normally need an injection of a contrast liquid.

Why do I need a breast MRI scan?

This imaging technique is used to assess the breasts when the usual methods fail to give enough information.

It is useful when there may be a problem with a breast implant, for the assessment of complicated breast problems, or for certain breast cancers.

It is used for certain women with a higher risk for 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.

A breast MRI scan is most helpful in younger women with a higher risk of breast cancer. It can show very subtle changes in breast tissue which could mean early breast cancer.

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

A MRI scan does not show calcium deposits which is 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 receive an appointment for a regular mammogram as well.

How do I get ready for the scan?

If you have been sent a safety questionnaire with your appointment letter, please fill it in and bring it with you.

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

If you have a fear of confined 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.

A member of staff will explain the procedure fully and ask you to complete a safety questionnaire before starting the scan if you haven't already done so.

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) - metal piercings can be replaced with plastic piercings before coming for your scan.
- hair clips and grips, wigs, hair pieces, weaves or extensions.
- eye make-up, fake eyelashes.
- sports clothing that contains silver fibres.
- stick-on drug patches - see instructions below.
- glucose monitoring device - see instructions below.

If you have a drug patch on your skin:

If you have a stick-on drug patch this will need to be removed before having your MRI scan. This is because the patch may warm up or get hot during the scan. This can change the amount of the drug being given to you.

Once a drug patch is removed it will not reattach to the skin. If you need your drug patch all the time, please bring a new patch with you so you can put it on after the scan is completed.

If your drug patch is applied by a nurse at home, please tell the nurse that you will need a new patch after your MRI appointment. They can then arrange to visit you at home to apply a new one.

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

If you use a glucose sensor (flash monitor or continuous glucose monitor (CGM)), which attaches to the surface of your skin, this will need to be removed for your MRI scan. Please bring a replacement to your appointment so you can apply it after your scan. Alternatively, you can contact 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 the scan can be performed. The pump can be reattached as soon as the scan is over.

If you have a patch pump, such as an Omnipod, you will need to remove the Pod and keep your Personal Diabetes Manager (PDM) outside of the room with your belongings. Please bring a new Pod to apply after your scan.

What happens during a breast MRI scan?

On arrival at the Radiology Department you will be directed to the relevant waiting area. You will be asked to change into a gown and remove **all** of your jewellery.

If your scan requires a contrast injection, the radiographer will place a very thin plastic tube called a cannula into a vein in your arm, to allow this to be administered. During the scan, the radiographer will tell you when the contrast liquid is being injected.

The scanner is noisy, and you will be offered earplugs to protect your ears from the noise.

You will need to lie 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 should have no after effects from an MRI scan.

You can eat and drink normally after the scan and you can return to normal activity/ work.

How do I get the results?

The images will be looked at by a doctor who specialises in medical imaging (radiologist). If you have had mammograms taken these will be reported at the same time.

The results will be sent to the specialist who referred you. Some women may need further tests such as an ultrasound scan and possibly a needle test.

Please make sure that you leave your telephone number so we can contact you and arrange any further tests at a convenient time for you.

Are there any risks?

- The use of magnetic fields in an MRI scan is not thought to be harmful.
- **Side effects or reaction to contrast liquid** - there is small risk of side effects from the contrast liquid. Symptoms are usually mild and may include itchy skin, pain at the injection site and occasionally feeling sick (nausea) or being sick (vomiting). Headache and chest pain are rare. If you get any of these symptoms at the hospital, please tell the doctor, nurse or other staff looking after you. If you develop 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 your appointment, please call the Radiology Department on **0116 258 8765 (option 2)** - Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, excluding bank holidays.



اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
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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 equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk