

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)

Preparing your child for an MRI scan



The MRI is a large machine with a long tube centered inside the magnet.

Please read the information on the following pages. Then talk with your child about what they will see, hear and feel during the MRI procedure. Let them know that they will be safe during the scan.

- **If your child is having anesthesia with the MRI**, arrive at least 1 hour before your appointment time. You will need to allow 2 to 4 hours for the whole visit. This includes the pre-anesthesia nurse visit and recovery time after the test.
- **If your child is having anesthesia**, a radiology nurse will call you 2 to 4 days before with eating instructions.
- **If anesthesia is not needed**, arrive 30 minutes before your scheduled appointment.
- If you plan to stay in the MRI room with your child, you must remove all metal objects from your person, including keys, coins, credit cards and wallets (braces and fillings are okay). We have a place to lock up your valuables.
- An MRI scan may not be done to children who are pregnant, have metal shavings in their eyes or have implants such as aneurysm clips, pacemakers, inner ear implants (ear tubes are okay) or certain prostheses. Be sure to tell your child's doctor if any of these conditions apply to you or your child.

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To Learn More

- Radiology
206-987-2133
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.



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What is an MRI scan?

MRI uses a magnetic field, radio waves and computers to help the doctor see healthy and diseased tissue without X-rays or surgery. The MRI scan makes detailed pictures that provide a multidimensional look at a body part. The MRI does not use radiation and has no known harmful effects.

How do we check in for the appointment?

- Seattle Children's Main Campus, 4800 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98105. Use Ocean Parking. Check in at Ocean 6 registration desk.
 - Bellevue Clinic and Surgery Center, 1500 116 Ave. NE, Bellevue, WA 98004. Park in the underground parking garage. Check in at 2nd floor registration.
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What happens during an MRI scan?

First, your child will change into a hospital gown or scrubs. Then you and your child will go through several metal screening checks before entering the MRI room. This is needed, because metal objects can be harmful, damage the machine and interfere with the MRI scan.

Once in the room, your child will lie on a narrow table. The table slides into the center of the magnet, which looks like a tube that is open at both ends.

Sometimes, we need to give your child an injection so that the scan shows the areas of concern more clearly. MRI results will be available to your child's referring doctor the day after the exam.



WARNING

No metal objects can be taken into the magnet room. Damage to the equipment and personal injury could result.

What else can my child expect?

- During the scan, the magnet makes some thumping and humming noises. Although these sounds may be scary at first, they are harmless.
- There is no pain during the MRI scan.
- Your child lies within the body-length tube inside the MRI. This is uncomfortable for some children. If you know your child has a fear of being inside a closed-in area please tell your doctor and MRI staff.
- Your child must lie very still while inside the magnet. Children who are unable to lie still will need anesthesia (a medicine that will make your child sleep).
- The actual scan may take 30 to 60 minutes to complete. During the scan, your child may listen to music or watch a movie (for some exams, movies are not an option). Your child may bring a favorite stuffed animal to the MRI scan. Remember to make sure that the toy does not have any metal parts.
- The MRI staff can see and hear your child at all times during the exam.
- One parent is welcome to stay in the room with their child during the scan once they are screened for metal. If your child is having anesthesia for the scan, parents are not allowed in the MRI room.

What if my child needs anesthesia?

If your child is unable to hold still for the MRI (30 to 60 minutes), they will be given anesthesia by an anesthesiologist. You can be with your child as they fall asleep, but you are not allowed in the scan room during the exam.

The anesthesiologist will closely check on your child throughout the exam. A registered nurse will check on your child after they come out and be there as your child wakes up from the anesthesia.

After the MRI scan, you must stay at the hospital until your child wakes up and is alert enough to go home (usually 30 to 60 minutes after the scan).

Questions?

Please feel free to ask questions before, during and after the scan.

How do we get the MRI results?

The images from your child's MRI are typically reviewed by a radiologist within 24 hours and a report will be sent to the doctor who ordered the test. If you have a clinic or doctor appointment scheduled, the doctor will review the results with you then. If you do not have a visit scheduled, you should call your child's doctor for the results.