

Breast Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)

An MRI is a diagnostic test that uses magnetic fields and sound waves to create images of areas inside the body. A liquid is injected into a vein in the arm or hand during an MRI. This helps the doctor see the part(s) of the body being examined.

Study results show when both a mammogram and an MRI are done, there is a better chance of a breast cancer being found early. Breast cancers found early are easier to treat.

Preparation

- Do not wear any makeup, including false eye lashes on the day of your MRI.
- Plan to spend about 2 hours in the MRI Center.
- You do not have to do anything special to prepare for this test, unless you have a metal tracheostomy. If you have a metal tracheostomy, it must be changed to a plastic one in the Head and Neck Center before the procedure.
- You may drink and eat as normal.

Procedure

1. Report to the Outpatient MRI Center and sign in with the receptionist. Please arrive at your scheduled time.
2. You will be taken to a patient dressing room, where you will be asked to change into a hospital gown or scrubs for safety and exam reasons. If you are wearing anything that contains metal, you will be asked to remove it.
3. The technologist will explain the procedure to you.
4. A technologist will start an intravenous (IV) line into a vein in your arm or hand. Through this line, you will receive a contrast medium (a solution that helps the doctor see the part(s) of the body being examined). The contrast medium does not contain iodine and will unlikely cause an allergic reaction.
5. Next you will be escorted to the MRI area where you will be asked to lie on a padded table. This table will gently move you into the imaging area of the MRI machine. Both ends of the MRI machine are open and it is lighted. To help keep you comfortable, a fan will be circulating air around you.
6. A two-way intercom system is set up for you to talk to the technologist at any time. You will also be given a special ball that you can squeeze to alert the technologist to any problems you may be experiencing.
7. It will be noisy while the MRI is operating. You will be given ear plugs. Once the test is complete, your intravenous (IV) line will be removed.

Patient Education

Robert and Margaret Hill Breast Center



Compared to mammogram, MRIs detect more false positives. This means an abnormality found in the breast that is not cancer. Some of these findings may need additional testing. This may include a biopsy to determine if cancer is present. A biopsy is the removal of cells or a piece of tissue. MRIs can create unnecessary fear, anxiety and health risks. MRIs also are costly. They may not be covered by insurance.

Please contact your health care provider if you have any questions or concerns.

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