

MRI Scan for a Perfect Diagnosis

Magnetic Resonance Imaging, in short 'MRI', is a picture of your inside body produced by radio waves and magnetic field. They show in detail the internal structures of your body such as joints, muscles, blood vessels, bone marrow and nerves etc. Though the images are two dimensional, the scans can be combined to form a three dimensional image on a computer. The MRI scans are also widely used to examine spine, brain, pelvis and abdomen.

You don't need any special restriction on eating and drinking for most of the MRI scans. However, in the case of pelvis or abdomen scan involving your lower body, you will have to restrict yourself from eating or drinking for five hours prior to the scan.

In case of Magnetic Resonance Cholangiopancreatography, or MRCP, to study your bile ducts, you have to stop consuming food before 2 to 3 hours of the scan. A contrast agent or special dye will be injected on some of the MRI scans to study the blood vessels and tissues in detail with clarity.

There are some common guidelines to be followed on metallic objects and clothing prior to a MRI scan. While undergoing a MRI scan you have to keep away your metal belongings as this can distort the images when attracted by the powerful magnetic field of the MRI scanner.

So, keep away all electronic and metal items that you may wear or have such as keys, coins, hairpins, jewelry, mobile phones, watches, hearing aids, dentures and wigs etc., as they may act as safety hazards. You can either wear gown according to the part being scanned, or alternatively wear clothing without fasteners, buttons, zips, buckles or belts.

The operator of the MRI scanner, a radiographer will enquire you about any earlier insertion of metal inside various parts of your body like pace maker, artificial heart valve, joint or artificial limb, metal clips on blood vessels inside brain, inner ear or cochlear implants, IUD or contraceptive coil, plates, staples or screws of surgery etc., to ensure a clear image.

In case you have a profession in dealing with welding or any other metal work, you have to reveal the details to the radiographer as there may be a probability of accidental intake of metal fragments inside your body. Women have to inform the professional about their pregnancy as the scan may affect the growth of the baby.

During the scan, you have to simply lie on a bed and a receiving device will be kept on the part of the body that has to be scanned and a motor will pass through the MRI scanner open at both sides. A radiographer will allow you to move your head or feet inside the scanner tube. Apart from scanner, a radiographer also operates a computer, kept at a distance from the magnetic field of the scanner and you can view the part of your body scanned through a monitor.

As the scan procedure is painless, keep yourself comfortable and cooperate with the scanning process by not moving the body part for a period of 15 minutes to 1 hour which depends on the number of pictures and size of the body part to be scanned. After the scan is over you are free to resume your occupation as before.

About the Author

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