

### After care contact

If at any point you would like to contact us after your appointment to discuss any concerns or issues you may have, please do not hesitate to call us on the number given in your appointment letter, where one of our friendly staff members will be happy to help.

If you require this information in a different format please let us know via **[customercare@alliance.co.uk](mailto:customercare@alliance.co.uk)**



# Open MRI

A guide to your scan



### Alliance Medical

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## What is an MRI scan?

A magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan is a powerful diagnostic tool that uses a strong magnetic field to produce high-quality images in multiple planes or directions. The images are generated using superconducting magnets and pulsed radio waves. It has been in use since the early 1980s and has no known side-effects.

MRI has become the investigation of choice for many neurological and musculoskeletal conditions and is used in all areas of the body. It helps identify problems in soft tissue in particular nerves, muscles, ligaments and tendons.

Traditional MRI scanners involve lying inside a tunnel for the duration of the examination, but our Open Upright MRI scanner is 'U' shaped, avoiding any sense of claustrophobia.

## Having an MRI scan

If you've never had an MRI scan you might not know what to expect and this brief guide is designed to answer the questions that might be in your mind.

It's important that you tell us before the scan if you:

- are (or might be) pregnant
- have a heart pacemaker or an artificial heart valve
- have any electro-mechanical devices used for drug delivery
- have any surgical clips
- have a cochlear implant, a neurostimulator or a programmable hydrocephalus shunt
- have had any operations on your head
- have any metal implant in your body
- have had an injury to your eyes involving metal or metal fragments - If there is a possibility that you might have metal fragments in your eyes, as a result of a penetrating injury, or from working with metal at high speed, you may need to have an X-ray to ensure that there are no particles present prior to your MRI scan.

## Before you arrive

We'll ask you some basic questions when you book your appointment and you'll be required to complete a questionnaire before your examination.

Unless we let you know otherwise, you don't need to make any special preparations before the scan. You can eat and drink as normal and take any prescribed medicine. If you are unsure, please do not hesitate to call our team for further information.

Please wear clothing without zips or metal buttons, and leave jewellery and watches at home if possible.

Please confirm your appointment by phone 24 hours before your scan and arrive in plenty of time.

Please let us know if you have any disabilities so that we can ensure we are able to offer you the highest quality service.

You're welcome to bring a friend or a relative with you, but for safety reasons they will be invited to wait in the lounge.

Don't forget to bring your appointment letter with you

## Preparation for the scan

Once you've checked in at reception a member of the radiography team will meet you, explain the procedure, go through your safety questionnaire with you and ask you to sign a consent form. You'll have the opportunity to ask any questions about the scanning process.

We will ask you to change into a hospital gown. We'll provide somewhere to store your personal possessions.

Throughout the procedure you will be looked after by the radiography team. They will explain what's happening and will be there should you experience any discomfort.

We might need to give you an injection (known as a contrast medium) to increase the amount of information we can get from the scan, depending on the area we're scanning. You will be informed of this by the clinical team.



## During the scan

The radiographer operating the scanner will be able to see and hear you throughout the procedure.

The examination consists of several scans, each lasting a few minutes with a short pause between each. The whole procedure will take between 45 and 120 minutes, depending on which part(s) of your body we're scanning.

We'll ask you to sit, stand or lie down on the scanner and we'll make sure you're comfortable so you can stay as still as possible. You won't feel anything, but there is some mechanical noise from the equipment so we'll provide you with some ear defenders or ear plugs.

## After the scan

There are no restrictions on normal activity, you can eat and drink normally, drive and return to work immediately after the scan.

If we've given you a contrast injection we will check you before you leave the scanner.

A consultant radiologist will examine the images shortly after your visit and send a report to your referring doctor or consultant within a few days.

For ethical and professional reasons, we cannot discuss results with you. Only your doctor or consultant can do this.