Patient’s Guide to
Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)/
Magnetic Resonance Angiography (MRA)

You are scheduled to have a MRI/MRA on ___________________________ at

☐ UW Hospital
600 Highland Ave
Madison, WI 53792
Take the Atrium elevators to 3rd floor
Check in at the G#/3 reception desk
Call (608) 263-XRAY (9729) to cancel or schedule appointments

☐ Research Park Clinic
621 Science Drive
Madison, WI 53711
Check in at 2nd Floor Radiology
Call (608) 263-XRAY (9729) to cancel or schedule appointments

☐ 1 South Park Clinic
1 South Park Street
Madison, WI 53715
Call (608) 287-2050 to cancel or schedule appointments

☐ The American Center
4602 East Park Blvd
Madison, WI 53792
Call (608) 263-XRAY (9729) to cancel or schedule appointments

☐ Wisconsin Sleep
6001 Research Park Blvd
Madison, WI 53719
Call (608) 265-8333 to cancel or schedule appointments

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Health Facts for you
What is MRI?

*Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)* is an imaging technique that uses a strong magnet, radio signal, and a computer to produce pictures of the inside of your body with great detail. It allows your doctor to get pictures of the bone and soft tissue. The scans are painless and use no x-ray. The pictures taken help the doctor to see both healthy and diseased tissue.

What is MRA?

*Magnetic Resonance Angiography (MRA)* is a type of MRI scan that looks at blood vessels and blood flow of certain organs. MRA uses the MRI technique to look at the flow of blood in your vessels. You may receive contrast to help see the images better. You may need to hold your breath for up to 30 seconds at times during the scan.

MRI scans for Children

Children can safely have MRI scans. Many children need medicine to help them relax and remain still during the scan. The MRI staff along with the Pediatric Specialty Clinic will work with your child's doctor to provide this medicine. A parent or other adult must stay with the child.

Is it safe for you to have MRI/MRA?

The MRI/MRA machine is a large magnet. Before your scan you must answer a safety screen to find out if you may have any metal placed in your body. It is vital that you answer these questions in an open and honest manner and to the best of your knowledge. Please tell the MRI staff if you have any of these items in your body.

- Pacemaker
- Artificial heart valve
- Implanted defibrillator
- Brain aneurysm clips
- Medicine patches
- Implantable pump
- Neurostimulator or TENS
- Eye or ear implant
- Hearing aids
- IUD
- Metallic implant
- Artificial body parts
- Stent, coil, filter
- Breast or penile implants
- Implanted shunts

If you have any of these items in your body it is helpful for the staff to also know:
- The date the device was placed.
- The hospital and doctor who placed it.
- The make or model number of the device (many times patients will have cards that have the model number and manufacturer’s name to carry in their wallets after having placement). If you do not have a card, we can often get this from the hospital where it was done.

Also, please tell the staff
- If you have any problems lying on your back and holding still for 30-60 minutes.
- If you have ever done metal grinding/welding as work or a hobby, or if you have ever seen a doctor about metal in your eyes.
- Have any metal in your body from an accident, gunshot, or military service wound.
- If you are pregnant. To date, there has been no indication that the use of MRI while pregnant
has been harmful. But there have not been many studies to research the safety of MRI exams in pregnant patients. You, your doctor and a radiologist need to discuss if MRI is the best option at this time. If it is felt that this test is vital for your care, you will need to sign a consent form before the scan.

- Do you have any problems with claustrophobia (fear of small, enclosed spaces)? If you do, please talk with your doctor who ordered the MRI/MRA. Your doctor will be able to discuss whether medicine can be ordered to help you with the test. **If you are taking something to relax you for this test, you will need to have a responsible adult to drive you home after your test.**

**Can I eat before my MRI?**

For the MRI/MRA it is best not to eat or drink 2 hours before the scan. If you receive contrast dye, it may make you feel nauseous. Please take your regularly scheduled medicines with a sip of water before you arrive in MRI.

*Do not eat if you have been scheduled for*

- **MRCP**
  Your doctor has scheduled you for a *Magnetic Resonance Cholangiopancreatography*. This is a medical imaging technique which uses MRI to look at the biliary and pancreatic ducts. This can be used to find whether gallstones are lodged in any of the ducts around the gallbladder. You will not be able to eat 4 hours before your MRCP.

- **IV Sedation**
  If you and your doctor decide you will need IV sedation, you may not eat solids up to 6 hours before and you may not drink clear liquids (juice, coffee, pop, etc.) for 4 hours before. A nurse will contact you ahead of time if you are to get IV sedation. It is vital that you follow their guidelines or we may have to postpone your scan to a later date.

  **If you have diabetes and will not be able to eat for 4 hours**, please talk with your doctor about any changes that need to be made to your insulin or pills. When setting up the appointment, please let the scheduler know you have diabetes so that we may schedule you early in the morning.

**How to prepare for a Scan**

You should arrive about 15 – 30 minutes before your scheduled scan. This will allow time for the staff to greet you and have you change into a gown. For some scans, we may need to inject contrast dye to get the best image. The contrast dye is given through a small catheter in the vein of your arm (IV). The catheter is removed before you go home.

- Do not wear any jewelry (wedding rings are okay). Watches and other jewelry may need to be removed. It depends on the part of your body to be scanned. To avoid loss of these items please leave them at home.

- If you are having a head MRI, do not wear mascara or other makeup that glitters. This can affect the quality of your scan.
- Do not wear hair clips or bobby pins
- Do not apply any lotions, oils, or fragrances the day of the scan.

If you are not having a head MRI you may bring a CD of your choice that we will be able to play for you through a headset while you are in the scanner. We will also have music choices or radio stations for you to listen to.

**During your Scan**

You will be brought into the scan room and placed on a padded, moving table, which glides into the large magnet. The magnet is round and open at both ends. Part or all of your body may be in the magnet. The inner part of the magnet is lighted and there is good airflow for your comfort. You will hear a loud tapping noise during the scanning process. You will be given ear plugs or headphones with music to help you during your scan. A call light will be given to you. The technologist will be able to see and hear you at all times during the scan.

The length of time you will be in the magnet will depend on what part of your body is being scanned. The time for the entire scan ranges from 30 to 90 minutes. **In order for us to get the best pictures of your body, you must lie very still and follow the breathing instructions as they are given while the MRI machine is scanning.**

**After your Scan**

When your scan is done, we will review the images. If an image is not clear, we will repeat the scan right away. After the scan, you will be able to leave unless you were given IV sedation and are still sleepy. You will need to be watched for a while if this is the case.

The radiologist (doctor that reads the image) will review the MRI scans and make a diagnosis or provide answers for your health problems. The radiologist will discuss the results of your scan with the doctor who ordered it. You will get the results from the doctor who ordered the exam.

**Questions**

If you have any questions or concerns, please call your referring doctor or clinic.

The Spanish version of this *Health Facts for You* is #5823.