

# MRI Arthrogram

**This leaflet explains about MRI Arthrograms, including the benefits, risks and any alternatives and what you can expect when you come to hospital.**

**If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.**

## What is an MRI Arthrogram?

An MRI arthrogram is an imaging examination used to obtain detailed images of a joint, such as the shoulder, hip or wrist. It involves the injection of a local anaesthetic and a small amount of MRI contrast dye into the joint, which is then followed by an MRI scan.

## Why should I have an MRI Arthrogram?

An MRI arthrogram is undertaken for people who are experiencing pain or symptoms in a joint. It will help to aid a diagnosis and plan for any further treatment required.

## What are the risks?

MR arthrograms are safe examinations. However, there is a very small chance that infection could be introduced into the joint by the injection. Some people find that the joint is sore for one to two days after the test.

Additionally, MRI scans use strong magnets to obtain images. Certain people with certain metal implants in their bodies may not be able to undergo an MRI scan. This includes pacemakers, inner ear implants, surgical clips within the head and some artificial metallic heart valves. It is important that you inform the radiographer of any implants inside your body so they can ensure you can undergo the scan safely.

## Are there any alternatives?

If you cannot have an MRI scan (for example if you have a pacemaker), the radiologist might suggest a different type of imaging.

## Asking for your consent

The radiographer (who performs the scan) will ask you if you are happy for the scan to go ahead. This is called 'verbal consent'. If you do not wish to have the scan or are undecided, please tell the radiographer. It is your decision, and you can change your mind at any time.

Please bear in mind that not having the scan can delay your diagnosis, as your doctors might not have all the information they need. You can ask the radiographer

any questions you have at any time before or after your scan. If you would like to read our consent policy, please tell a member of staff.

## **What happens during an MRI Arthrogram?**

When you arrive at the MRI department a radiographer will go through an MRI Safety Questionnaire with you and then you will be asked to change into a hospital gown.

There are two parts to the procedure. For the first part, you will be taken to an ultrasound or x-ray room where a consultant radiologist will inject a small amount of local anaesthetic to numb the skin and the joint. This is followed by a small injection of MRI contrast dye into the joint. Ultrasound or x-rays are used to guide the needle into the joint space. When this is complete, you will then be taken to the MRI scanner for an MRI scan of the joint, which usually takes about 20-30 minutes.

During the MRI scan you will be asked to lie on the scanning table. Some equipment will then be placed over the area to be scanned. The scanning table will move up and into the scanner. The MRI scanner is very noisy and you will be given earplugs / headphones to protect your hearing during the scan. You will also be given a buzzer to press if you need to speak to the radiographer during your scan. It is very important that you keep still during the scan to produce good quality images.

Once the scan is complete you will be allowed to change out of the gown and you may make your way home.

## **Will I feel any pain?**

After the injection, the joint and the area around the joint may be numb for a few hours. However, if it becomes painful, you may take simple pain killers such as paracetamol. Sometimes moving the joint and sore area can help as can placing an ice pack on the affected area for a few minutes to help relieve pain. You can usually go home straight after having the injection and MRI. If you have urgent concerns after going home, please see your GP or attend the Emergency Department.

You should not experience any pain from the MRI scan. For you to be able to keep completely still during the scan, the radiographer will try to make you as comfortable as possible.

The scanner is a short tunnel. If you are claustrophobic (fear of enclosed spaces) please let us know before you come for the scan or call your GP who may be able to prescribe a medication that may help.

## What happens after an MRI Arthrogram?

Once the MRI scan is complete you will be able to leave the department and return home. The images will be reviewed and a detailed report will be made by a radiologist. This report will be sent to the doctor who referred you for the study who will then contact you with the results. This report may take up to two weeks to become available.

It is essential that you do not operate any dangerous machinery. You should not drive for the rest of the day, so please make arrangements for going home. We also advise you not to carry heavy loads for the next three to four days. After this period, you can then resume normal activities.

## Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about the procedure, please contact the MRI department on 020 8725 2933 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)

**For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.stgeorges.nhs.uk](http://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk)**

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## Additional services

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings (near the lift foyer).

**Tel:** 020 8725 2453 **Email:** [pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk)

### NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health. **Web:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones. **Tel:** 111

### AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website ([www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.

