

MRI Scan for Babies using Feed and Wrap Technique

This leaflet explains about MRI scans, 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 your child.

What is an MRI scan?

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) is a type of scan that uses strong magnetic fields and radio waves to produce detailed images of the inside of the body. An MRI scanner is a large, short tube that is open at both ends and contains powerful magnets. An MRI scan can be used to examine almost any part of the body. The results of the scan can be used to help diagnose conditions, plan treatments and assess how effective previous treatment has been.

Is MRI scanning safe for my baby?

Much research has been carried out into whether the magnetic fields and radio waves used during MRI scans could pose a risk to the human body. No evidence has been found to suggest there is a risk, which means MRI scans are one of the safest medical procedures available.

MRI scans may not be recommended in certain situations. For example, if your baby has a metal implant fitted, s/he may not be able to have an MRI scan.

An MRI scan is a painless and safe procedure. However, the scanner produces very loud noises which your baby may find uncomfortable.

Are there any alternatives?

Alternative scans such as Computed Tomography (CT) scans, ultrasound scans or X-rays are other types of medical imaging. Your baby's doctor will request which imaging will be most helpful for the diagnosis of your baby's condition.

Preparation required for MRI scans using feed and wrap technique

Try to keep your baby awake on the journey to the hospital so that it is easier for them to fall to sleep at the time of their appointment. We advise keeping them a bit hungry and ready for a feed just before the appointment. If using formula milk, please bring some with you as we are unable to provide this.

If possible, please dress your baby in clothes that do not have any metallic zips or poppers so that their clothes do not need to be removed during the scan.

Once you have arrived in the department you will be asked to complete an MRI safety questionnaire for both you and your baby which a radiographer will check through with you. This is to ensure the safety of both of you in the MRI scan.

You will then be offered a quiet and private space for you to feed your baby. This will hopefully encourage your baby to fall into a natural sleep so that the scan can be performed. Please allow plenty of time for your appointment as your baby may not be asleep at the time of the appointment. If this is case, we will try to fit in you and your baby around other appointments.

Prior to entering the scanner room all loose metal objects such as keys, jewellery, watches and credit cards will need to be locked away.

What happens during the MRI scan?

Your baby will be lying on the scanner table during the scan. There will be some equipment over the area of the body that is being scanned which helps to take the pictures. Scan times can vary from around 15 minutes to one hour depending on the area being scanned.

The scanner produces very loud noises which is why we try to get your baby in a deep sleep before starting the scan. You and your baby will be given ear protection (earplugs or headphones) to protect your hearing.

You will be given a buzzer which you should press to alert the radiographer if you can see your baby has woken up and is moving or seems distressed.

What happens after the MRI scan?

If the scan is successful, you will be able to go home once the scan is completed. A radiologist (a doctor who specialises in interpreting scans) will review the images and produce a report which will be sent to your baby's doctor. This report will not be available on the day of the scan and can take two weeks to become available.

You will receive the report from the doctor who requested the MRI scan.

Occasionally, the feed and wrap process will be unsuccessful. This could be due to your baby not falling asleep at all or waking up during the scan. If this happens the referring doctor will be informed and they will make a clinical decision as to whether the MRI scan should be rescheduled with sedation or a general anaesthetic.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about the procedure, please contact the MRI department by phone 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

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



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

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). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.