

MRI Small Bowel Study

This leaflet explains about MRI Small bowel studies, 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 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?

Lots of 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 you have a metal implant fitted, such as a pacemaker or artificial joint, you may not be able to have an MRI scan. They are also not usually recommended during pregnancy.

An MRI scan is a painless and safe procedure. You may find it uncomfortable if you have claustrophobia but most people are able to manage it with support from the radiographer. Going

into the scanner feet first may be easier, although this is not always possible.

Preparation for an MRI small Bowel Study

On the day of your appointment please do not eat anything for six hours prior to the scan. You may have plenty of clear fluids such as water, black tea or coffee and soft drinks.

Please attend the department in comfortable clothing that does not have any metallic zips or buttons if possible. Any jewellery or watches will need to be removed before the scan.

When you arrive in the department you will be given an MRI safety questionnaire to complete. This will ask for details about any surgery or implants in your body and is to ensure it is safe for you to go into the MRI scanner. A radiographer will go through this questionnaire with you.

Prior to the scan you are required to drink an oral contrast medium. You will be given two jugs of this contrast medium (1.5 litres) and over the course of 90 minutes you should drink this steadily. Sometimes this oral contrast can cause nausea, so an anti-sickness medication is added to the contrast. The contrast may also cause some diarrhoea but its use is necessary to obtain the best possible images.

What happens during the MRI scan?

During the MRI scan you will be asked to lie down on the scanner table which will move up and into the scanner. Some equipment will be placed over your abdomen which will help to take the images. It is very important that you keep as still as possible as movement causes the images to be very blurred and may need to be repeated. You will be asked to breathe in and hold your breath (for about 15-20 seconds)

repeatedly during the scan as breathing also causes the images to be blurred.

During the scan you will be given two injections. To administer these injections a cannula (plastic tube inserted into a vein) will be placed in your arm. The injections are: Buscopan which helps to reduce involuntary bowel movements that may cause the images to be blurred and a contrast injection (Gadolinium) to obtain more information from the images.

The MRI scanner is very noisy and you will be given ear protection such as earplugs or headphones. You will also be given a buzzer to hold which you may use to speak to the radiographer during the scan if needed. The scan lasts around 20-30 minutes.

What happens after the MRI scan?

Once the scan is finished you may leave the department and return home. You may eat and drink as normal and do your usual activities.

The Buscopan given to you during your scan may cause your vision to become blurred for a short time afterwards.

This should return to normal around 30-45 minutes after the injection. You should not drive until your vision has returned to normal and as such, we recommend you make alternative arrangements for travel to your appointment.

The scan will be carefully studied and reported by the radiologist which will be sent to the doctor who referred you for the scan. It may take up to two weeks for the report to be available.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your MRI scan, 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.