



MRI scans at GOSH

This information sheet explains about magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans at Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) and what they involve.

What is an MRI scan?

An MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scan uses a magnetic field rather than x-rays to take pictures of your child's body. The MRI scanner is a hollow machine with a tube running horizontally through its middle. Your child will lie on a bed that slides into the tube. An MRI scan usually lasts between 20 minutes and an hour.

Please watch our podcast (short video film) about having an MRI, available at www.gosh.nhs.uk/medical-conditions/procedures-and-treatments/your-child-is-having-an-mri-scan/video-your-child-is-having-an-mri-scan/ or on the GOSH channel on YouTube.

Are there any alternatives?

Your child may need this scan so that their doctors can get detailed pictures of the size and shape of part of your child's body. Various types of scan such as CT, ultrasound and x-rays can show the size and shape of parts of your child's body but not in as much detail as an MRI scan. The information from the scan is then used to plan their treatment.

What does the scan involve?

At GOSH, children can have the scan under sedation, under general anaesthetic or without either. Your child will be assessed by the nurses and radiographers in the MRI department to see which option is most suitable for your child. This decision is based on your child's medical condition and the type of scan needed.

Children having the scan under sedation or general anaesthetic will need to 'fast' or stop eating and drinking for a while beforehand. Fasting is not needed for scans without sedation or general anaesthetic unless stated in the appointment letter. Small babies often have a 'feed and wrap', that is, they are given a feed and then wrapped tightly in a towel. Usually, babies doze off when this is done so lie still during the scan.

Your child will need to lie on the bed for the scan. Depending on the part of their body being scanned, they may need to have a coil over part of their body or wear a head coil (this will not touch their head).

When your child is in the correct position, the radiographer will move the bed inside the scanner and then go into the control room. When the scan has finished, the radiographer will move the bed out of the scanner. Your child can then get up and leave if they have not had sedation or a general anaesthetic, or will be moved into the recovery area to wake up from the sedation or general anaesthetic.



Are there any risks?

There are no risks associated with MRI scans. They are painless quick with no lasting effects. The scanner does not touch your child during the scan. MRI scans are not suitable for people with certain metal implants inside them (pacemakers or surgical clips) because the scanner emits a strong magnetic field. This is why we carry out a thorough metal check before your child has the scan.

What happens next?

Before we book the scan, the MRI nurse will need to assess your child, either in the department or over the telephone. Once they have decided how best your child can have the MRI scan, we will book a date and send you more detailed information about preparing for the scan. As so many children and young people need to use our services, we have had to introduce a policy where if a child cancels or does not attend two appointments in a row, we will close their referral and inform their GOSH consultant.

**If you have any questions or concerns,
please contact:**

**Radiology Play Specialist:
020 7405 9200 ext. 0301**

MRI Bookings: 020 7813 8510

Compiled by the Radiology department in collaboration with the Child and Family Information Group
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