

MRI Scanning for Small Bowel Disease

Introduction

This leaflet tells you about having an MRI scan for small bowel disease. The small bowel is difficult for doctors to get to with an endoscope (camera). It lies beyond the stomach and duodenum, and loops around for several metres to the right lower abdomen where it joins the large bowel.

What is an MRI scan for small bowel disease?

In the past we relied on a barium follow-through examination or CT scanning to look for disease in the small bowel. Both these examinations use x-rays which carry a small radiation risk. MRI scanning uses radio-frequency waves in a strong magnetic field to produce pictures and avoids this risk. It produces excellent pictures of the small bowel which may help your consultant with diagnosis and planning of any treatment.

A radiographer who is highly trained will perform your scan and it will then be interpreted by a specially trained doctor called a radiologist.

Who will be present for the scan?

Radiographers and radiographic assistants will be present in the room to prepare you for the scan; they will introduce themselves at the start of the procedure.

Occasionally student radiographers may be present to observe the scan.

Is there any preparation needed before my scan?

In order to see the bowel wall clearly you will be asked to not eat. Please study your appointment letter carefully and follow the instructions.

Please read the leaflet regarding MRI scanning. MRI is noisy and time consuming so please be prepared for this.

Please tell the radiographers if you have metal fragments or implants in your body.

What happens during the scan?

On arrival you will be asked to change into a gown by a member of staff.

You will be given a large volume of special fluid to drink slowly over a period of time which will distend the bowel for the examination.

You will then be taken into the scan room and asked to lie on your back on the scan table. A small needle will be used to insert a line into a vein in your arm.

An injection of buscopan is given which reduces the amount of peristalsis (movement) in the bowel.

You will then be positioned in the scanner lying on your tummy.

We will make you comfortable and answer any queries you may have. The scan will then be taken.

During the scan a contrast dye is injected through the line already in the vein in your arm. This highlights any inflammation in the bowel.

The radiographer will leave the room during the scan, but will be able to talk to you through an intercom.

For some of the scans the Radiographer will ask you to hold your breath.

Will it hurt?

No but you may feel full and bloated as the drink distends the bowel.

How long will it take?

The length of the scan is usually is around 30-40 minutes.

You can expect to be in the Medical Imaging Department for up to 1½ hours as you have to drink the fluid first to prepare for the scan.

What happens after the scan?

After the scans the line is removed and you will be able to go home. A radiologist will report on the scan images.

You are likely to experience frequent, loose bowel motions due to the solution used to distend the bowel. Please accept our apologies for this.

Are there any risks or complications?

Pregnant women should contact the department before their appointment for further instructions.

If you are breastfeeding please contact the department for more information.

The contrast dye used in MRI scans contains gadolinium. Prior to IV contrast being given you will be asked if you have any known allergies or kidney problems.

Buscopan may rarely precipitate acute glaucoma. If you develop a painful eye in the 24 hours following the procedure you should attend A&E immediately.

Contact us

If you found reading your leaflet difficult, you do not understand what it means for you, if you have any queries or concerns you can contact us on: **01392 402336** and we can talk it through.

How to get to the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital at Wonford

Please refer to the enclosed "Welcome to the Medical Imaging Department" leaflet or use the Trusts website for the latest information:

www.rdehospital.nhs.uk/our-sites

For more information on the Medical Imaging Department, please visit our website:

www.rdehospital.nhs.uk/services/medical-imaging-radiology-x-ray

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