

Having MR Small Bowel (MR Enterography)

Information for Patients

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Introduction

This leaflet tells you about having MR Enterography, a test to look at your small bowel. It explains how the test is done, what to expect, and what the possible risks are.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

What is an MR Small Bowel (MR Enterography)?

An MR Small Bowel (MR Enterography) is a non-invasive way of looking inside your small bowel and abdomen. The small bowel is the portion of your intestine joining the stomach and duodenum to the large bowel.

An MRI scanner is a short tunnel that is open at both ends. It uses a powerful magnet, radiowaves and a computer to produce images of the internal structures of the body. MRI does not use ionizing radiation (x-rays). The scanner is operated by a Radiographer, who is a professional trained to carry out X-rays and other imaging procedures. The pictures are displayed on a computer workstation for examination by the Radiologist, who is a doctor specially trained to interpret the images and carry out more complex imaging examinations



MRI scans provide good detail of internal organs, blood vessels and soft tissues so are often the preferred method of diagnosing and assessing a wide range of medical conditions such as cancers, infection, inflammation, cardiovascular disease, trauma and musculoskeletal disorders. For MR Small Bowel, fluid is drunk prior to the scan to distend the small bowel so that it can be well seen on the MRI images.

What do I need to do before my scan?

Bowel preparation.

It is very important for the stomach and small bowel to be empty before the test is performed so that the small bowel can be clearly seen. You will be given a leaflet explaining this bowel preparation in more detail. The leaflet gives dietary instructions about what you should and should not eat or drink before your test. Sometimes a mild laxative is prescribed to clear the small bowel prior to the test. It is very important that you follow the instructions you are given.

Taking tablets and medicines

You should continue to take all your normal medication. If you are diabetic using insulin, please contact the Radiology department for advice.

Females

Females are asked to contact the Radiology department if you suspect that you may be pregnant. There is no evidence that MRI is unsafe in pregnancy, but as a precaution, we do not perform MRI on pregnant ladies unless it is essential.

MRI Safety Questionnaire

The magnetic field used for MRI scans is very strong and can affect metal or electronic implants. Please take time to read through and complete the attached MRI Safety questionnaire, which asks about any metal implants, such as artificial joints and stents, or electronic devices, such as a pacemaker, that you may have inside you. If all of the answers are no then please bring the completed questionnaire to your appointment. If, however there are answers that are yes, then please return the completed questionnaire immediately to the Radiology department or telephone the MRI appointments desk for advice.

Where do I go when I arrive at the hospital?

Please report to the reception desk in the Radiology department (B8) with your appointment letter. Please click on the following link for a site map of the hospital:

http://www.ruh.nhs.uk/finding/documents/RUH_directory_map.pdf

You will be asked to arrive at least 45 minutes before your scan for preparation. You will be asked to sit in the waiting area until called by a member of staff.

A member of the team will explain the test, go through the MRI safety questionnaire with you, and answer any questions.

Please let us know if you have any of the following conditions:

- Diabetes
- Kidney disease
- Heart disease
- Glaucoma
- Any allergies

You will be shown to a private cubicle and asked to change into a clean gown. You may be allowed to wear your own clothing if it has no metal fasteners, zips or buckles.

Please do not wear any items of jewellery, as they may need to be removed prior to the scan. Your clothes and valuables will be secured in a locker until after the procedure.

Can I bring a relative or friend?

You may bring a relative or friend with you to the appointment but, for reasons of safety, they will not be able to accompany you into the examination room, except in very special circumstances. If the patient is a young child or is un-cooperative, a parent or health worker may stay in the scanner room.

If you need an interpreter please tell us when you receive your appointment so that we can arrange this.

What happens during the procedure?

You will be asked to drink about 1.5 litres of liquid steadily over approximately 40 minutes prior to getting on the MRI scanner. This tastes like slightly sugary water, but is not unpleasant. A small tube, called a cannula, will be inserted into one of the veins in your arm.

You will be taken into the MRI Scanning Room and asked to lie down on the moveable scanner table, if possible on your tummy. A receiving device will be placed around your abdomen and the scanner table will move you into the scanner. MRI scans will be performed to see whether the liquid has passed all the way through the small bowel. Once the fluid has filled the entire small bowel a muscle relaxant will normally be injected through the cannula into the vein. This will stop the bowel from moving during the scan and give better images of your bowel. The muscle relaxant may make your eyesight blurred and give you a dry mouth, but it soon wears off. However, you should not drive for 30 minutes after the injection.

The MRI scan will then be performed and takes approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. You will be asked to remain still and hold your breath for short periods whilst the scans are taken. At certain times during the procedure, the MRI scanner will make a loud knocking noise caused by the magnets in the machine being turned on and off. You will be given earplugs or headphones to wear. You are welcome to bring your own music CD with you to listen to through the headphones during the scan. You will be given an injection of intravenous contrast medium via the cannula during the scan.

You will be alone in the MRI room during the scan but the Radiographer will be able to see, hear and speak with you at all times.

What happens after the scan?

The liquid you drink may cause some short lived diarrhoea, so you may wish to spend a short time in the department near to a toilet before you go home. You may eat and drink as normal as soon as the examination is finished. Normal activities may normally be resumed immediately after the scan.

Are there any risks?

MR small bowel is generally regarded as a very safe test. There is no known adverse effect of the magnetic field and radio waves used in MRI on living tissues.

A small proportion of people (2 – 5 %) find MRI examinations difficult because of the partly enclosed nature of the scanner, causing claustrophobia. Occasionally, mild sedation (relaxing tablets) may help to reduce the anxiety about being in a confined space. If you feel you will need a sedative please discuss this with your GP to obtain the prescription before your scan. If you have had a sedative for the procedure you are advised not to drive, travel alone or return to work for the rest of the day. You should arrange for someone to accompany you home after the test.

There is a slight risk of an allergic reaction if contrast material is injected. A Radiologist or other clinician will be available to assist if you experience any symptoms of an allergic reaction. Such reactions are usually mild and easily controlled by medication.

Other problems which might occur are similar to those which can happen with other methods of examining the small bowel. These include:

- Nausea or Abdominal discomfort
- The liquid you drink may cause some short-lived diarrhoea

Despite these slight risks, your doctor believes it is advisable that you should have this examination, and do bear in mind there are greater risks from missing a serious disorder by *not* having your scan.

How do I get my results?

A specialist Radiologist will review the images from your MR Enterography and send a report to your doctor. Your GP or hospital Consultant who referred you for the test will see you to discuss the results.

Any questions?

We will do our best to make your visit as comfortable and stress free as possible. If you have any questions, or suggestions for us, please contact MRI appointments on 01225 824072.

More information

For general information about Radiology departments, visit The Royal College of Radiologists' website: <https://www.rcr.ac.uk/public-and-media/what-expect-when>

How do I make a comment about my examination?

If you have any concerns or suggestions following your examination, please contact the [Patient Advice and Liaison Service \(PALS\)](#),
Royal United Hospital Bath NHS Trust, Combe Park, Bath BA1 3NG.
Email: ruh-tr.PatientAdviceandLiaisonService@nhs.net
Tel: 01225 821655 or 01225 826319