

# Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)



## What is an MRI?

An MRI is a scan that takes detailed pictures of the inside of the body. There is no exposure to radiation during this scan.

## How do we prepare for the MRI?

- Adults going with the child into the MRI room should avoid wearing any metal.
- Children are not allowed in the waiting room without an adult. If you will be in the MRI room with your child, please bring another adult with you to watch your other children.

## What will happen during the MRI?

A staff member will take you and your child to the MRI room. One adult family member/caregiver will be able to stay with your child during the whole MRI. If you are pregnant, you will need to leave the room during the scan. Your child will need to change into a hospital gown without snaps.

- The MRI tech will help your child onto the procedure bed and into the right position for pictures.
- The MRI tech also will place movie goggles over your child's eyes and headphones over your child's ears so they can watch a movie during the MRI. For some types of MRIs, watching a movie is not an option.
- Your child also will have a microphone connected to the headphones so they can talk to the MRI tech when needed.
- The bed will slowly move up and back into the machine. Your child will need to lie completely still during the MRI. This allows us to get clear pictures of the inside of the body. In most cases, this will take 30 to 60 minutes.
- When taking pictures, the camera makes loud, knocking noises. You will be given ear plugs to wear so you can't hear the noise as much. The headphones your child wears during the MRI also will help lessen the noise.

## What is contrast?

- Contrast is a dye (or liquid) that is used to highlight specific areas in the body more clearly in your child's CT scan.
- If your child needs contrast for the MRI, before the scan:
  - An intravenous line (IV) will be placed and/or
  - Your child will be given apple juice, clear soda or Powerade® mixed with contrast. Your child will be asked to drink it slowly over a one-hour period.
  - A nurse will give the contrast during part of the MRI.

## What if my child needs IV contrast?

- If your child needs IV contrast, an intravenous line (IV) will be placed. An intravenous line (IV) is a soft, flexible tube placed inside a vein. IV lines are used to give your child medicine or fluids.

## Radiology

- The nurse will look for a good vein (usually on the hands or arms) to place the IV.
- They will clean the skin and spray a special cold spray on it to help with pain.
- Then, the nurse will use a needle to place a small tube into your child's vein.
- Once the IV is in place, the needle will be taken out, leaving only a small, soft tube in your child.
- The nurses will put special water in the IV to make sure it's in the right place.
- The IV will be taped to help it stay in place and to keep your child from moving it.
- If your child needs IV contrast, a small machine will be connected to the IV to give the contrast. The contrast does not hurt when going into the IV, but it may feel warm.

Once the MRI tech is done taking the pictures, a staff member will take you and your child to the recovery area. If an IV was placed, a nurse will remove it. Then you will be discharged home or the Transport Team will take you back to your inpatient room.

### How can I help my child?

Explain to your child what will happen during the MRI. Use simple words that are familiar to you and your child.

- Be honest with your child about the MRI.
- Have your child practice holding still at home before the scan.
- Bring comforting things that your child enjoys from home, such as a favorite movie, toy, blanket, book, etc. (However, these items will not be allowed inside the MRI room.)
- Praise and support your child during the MRI. (Say, "Good job holding still," and acknowledge their feelings.)
- Ask questions. Make sure you have all the information you need to be prepared and to best support your child.

### Glossary

**Contrast:** a dye that helps the doctors see the pictures better.

**Intravenous line (IV):** An intravenous line (IV) is a soft, flexible tube placed inside a vein. IV lines are used to give your child medicine or fluids.

**MRI tech:** a person who takes pictures of the body.

**Radiologist:** a doctor who takes and looks at pictures from the scan.

**If you would like a Child Life Specialist to talk to your child about the scan or give support, call 323-361-7675.**