

Patient Information

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)

What is an MRI?

MRI stands for Magnetic Resonance Imaging. MRI scans use a strong magnetic field and low energy radio waves to create high resolution images of selected anatomy. It highlights any relevant pathology or injury present with exquisite and precise detail.

This technology does not use ionising radiation (x-ray) and is considered to be very safe for patients, especially those requiring multiple follow up studies. Qscan MRI scanners use the latest available state of the art technology to produce world class MR imaging quality.

The MRI machine appears similar to a large tube in shape with a short tunnel through the centre. The noise produced by MRI scanners is very loud, so hearing protection is provided.

An emergency alarm is also available during the scan to alert the radiographer should you need any assistance.

What preparation is required?

MRI uses a strong magnetic field which is considered to be safe for patients. At the time of booking and on arrival, you will be asked to complete a safety questionnaire to ensure it is safe for you to have the scan. Patients who have certain metal implants may be at risk of either damage to their implant or themselves. Many metal implants have been tested and are safe to enter the room however some are very dangerous (eg. pace makers).

The safety questionnaire is a critical part of your preparation for any MRI scan and you will be asked at multiple stages during your booking and preparation to ensure you are safe to enter the room. Please be patient in answering these questions as your safety is paramount at Qscan. In most cases there is no other special preparation for an MRI scan. For some specific scan applications, you may be asked to follow special instructions eg. restrict food and drink for 4-6 hours before your scan.

If required, a staff member will advise you of this at the time of booking.

What happens during my MRI Scan?

You will be given a full explanation of the procedure by the Qscan MRI Radiographer performing your examination. Please ask questions if you have any queries during this process. Most people's experience will depend on the region being scanned, so the time required and set up process may vary from patient to patient.

The MRI machine looks like a large tube that has both ends open. You will be asked to lie down on a movable table that slides into the opening. You will be monitored from our console room through a window where you can talk with the Radiographer by microphone between scans.

The procedure is painless. The region of interest to be scanned will have an antennae placed around it and this area will move to the center of the MRI machine. You will hear a loud rhythmic array of sounds which will vary in time from 2-4 minutes at a time. Ear protection will be provided prior to the exam starting.

It is important that we can have you feeling comfortable, calm and relaxed to ensure you can remain still and get the best quality exam possible. If you are worried about feeling claustrophobic inside the MRI machine, talk to your referring doctor beforehand. You may receive a sedative before the scan (if needed).

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You will be required to lie down on a table and an antennae (used to receive the image signal from your body), will be placed around the region of interest. This region will be moved to the centre of the MRI scanner for the duration of the scan. You will be asked to remain as still as possible in order to achieve maximum quality of the images produced.

Most regions of the body should take up to 20-25 minutes once you have been prepared and set up. If you have multiple regions to be scanned, you will be repositioned with the antennae around the new region of interest and the process begins again. In some cases, a contrast material called gadolinium may be injected through an intravenous (IV) line into a vein in your hand or arm. This contrast material is used to help enhance the appearance of blood flow details during the examination.

Metal objects such as watches, keys, coins and jewellery cannot be taken into the MRI room. This is because the powerful magnet can cause these objects to be pulled with great force or heat up causing potentially serious damage to yourself.

The MRI magnet will also erase any cards with magnetic strips, such as your bank or credit cards, and damage most electronic/mechanical devices such as phones, watches etc. Jewellery made of conductive materials is at risk of heating. If your jewellery cannot be removed (eg. rings), some precautions can be taken however it is best to wear as little jewellery as possible when you arrive. If you wear clothing with metal studs or clips, you will be asked to change into one of our gowns for your own safety. Some examinations may also require you to wear a gown to allow the MRI Radiographer to capture the best images.

How long will the MRI take?

Most regions of the body should take up to 20-25 minutes once you have been prepared and positioned however a MRI can last up to 1 hour or more if multiple regions are requested. The duration of your MRI will be confirmed at the time of your booking. It is also important that you are as comfortable as possible. This will ensure that you remain calm and stay very still during the examination as any movement can result in blurry images.

What is the radiation dose?

MRI itself has no known harmful effects, but is not recommended during pregnancy unless under special circumstances. Contrast injections are not advised during pregnancy/breast feeding unless specifically required. These potential risks will be discussed if necessary.

How much will the examination cost?

The cost of your MRI scan depends on a number of factors, including the type of scan that your doctor has requested, how many regions of the body require imaging, the duration time for the scan as well as the speciality of your referring doctor. Our Customer Service Team will be able to advise you of all costs involved with your MRI scan including any out of pocket cost.

When can I get my results?

Images obtained from your scan are digitally recorded. At Qscan, a subspecialty trained Radiologist interprets the images obtained and provides a report for your doctor within 24 hours. Reports and images will be available electronically via the patient app and web portal after your examination. If required, films are available for collection or delivery to your referring practitioner. You may need to make a follow up appointment to discuss the results with your referring practitioner.

Where can I go for an MRI Scan?

Qscan Radiology Clinics have a range of convenient clinics located throughout South-East Queensland. including: Annerley, Mater Private Clinic, Redcliffe, Southport and Windsor.

For further details please call one of our friendly Qscan staff on **1300 177 226** or visit us at: **qscan.com.au**