

MRI: Frequently Asked Questions

What Is MRI?

Magnetic Resonance Imaging, or MRI, uses magnetic waves to create detailed pictures of the body's internal organs and tissues. MRI scans are especially useful for imaging the brain. They provide information about its structure. MRI scans do not show brain activity or function.

What Can I Expect during an MRI Scan?

The MRI machine looks like a long tube, open at both ends. During the procedure, you will lie on a padded table that slides into the tube. As the images are taken, you will hear knocking noises, which can be quite loud. You may be provided with earplugs or music to reduce the sound.

Do I Need to Prepare for an MRI Scan?

There is no special preparation for an MRI scan. When you arrive at the clinic, you will be asked to remove accessories, such as jewelry, eyeglasses and any other metallic objects. Since the MRI uses magnetic fields, it is important to tell your study team if you have any piercings, tattoos or implanted devices, such as a deep brain stimulator.

Will I Be Exposed to Radiation during MRI?

No. MRI does not use radiation to take pictures of the body.

Will I Get Claustrophobic during MRI?

Although most individuals tolerate the procedure well, you may experience some unease if you feel anxious in narrow spaces. If you are concerned about claustrophobia, speak to your study team before the procedure.

How Are MRI Results Used for Research?

Researchers are looking to use MRI to track brain changes over time in individuals with Parkinson's disease (PD). In addition, by comparing scans from control participants (people without PD) to scans from people with PD, researchers can learn about changes that are unique to PD as well as changes that are associated with normal aging. Researchers are investigating whether special forms of MRI scans can be used as PD biomarkers — objective measures to diagnose and track disease.

Will I Be Notified about My MRI Results?

The information obtained in this procedure will be used primarily for research. Study personnel will contact you if your MRI results require further consultation.

