

PATIENT INFORMATION

YOUR CHILD IS HAVING AN MRI SCAN UNDER GENERAL ANAESTHESIA (GA)



What is an MRI scan?

An MRI scan uses a magnetic field and radio waves to take pictures of your child's body.

The scanner is a hollow machine with a tube running through the centre.

Your child will lie on a bed that slides in and out of the tube.

A scan lasts between 20 minutes to two hours, so your child's scan (including the anaesthetic) may take over two hours.

Why does my child need an anaesthetic for their scan?

The scans take a long time and to get proper images, your child will need to lie still. This may be challenging for them for a number of reasons so we offer a general anaesthetic if it would be beneficial.

Are there any alternatives to MRI scan?

MRI is very safe, doesn't use radiation and produces very detailed images.

There are alternatives to MRI, such as ultrasound or CT, but MRI might be the best way to get the pictures needed for your child's diagnosis and management plan.

Preparing your child for a general anaesthetic

Your appointment letter will detail the time you and your child should arrive to the paediatric admission area. Your child may wear their own clothes but these must not contain any metal. Please bring a spare change of clothes.

Please bring a tablet/book or comforter to help keep your child occupied while waiting.

We can provide toast and cereals for a snack after the scan. You might wish to bring any specific snacks for your child to enjoy afterwards.

If your child has COVID or symptoms of COVID in the run up to the scan please let us know and do not attend (see below for contact details).

Fasting

It is very important that your child does not eat or drink anything before their anaesthetic.

Typically, it is recommended to fast for 6 hours for food, 4 hours for breast milk and 1 hour for clear fluids (i.e. water or diluted squash). Please do keep your child hydrated in the run up to the scan.

For a morning MRI scan your child should NOT eat after midnight and should drink clear fluids (water or dilute squash) up until 7am.

For an afternoon MRI scan your child can have a light breakfast but they should not eat anything after 7am. Your child should drink clear fluids (water or dilute squash) up until 11am.

Further drinks can be given in the admission area on the advice of the anaesthetist.

On the day of your child's MRI

Car parking will be charged at a reduced rate of £1:00 for this admission, please ask a member of staff for a ticket.

Your child will be admitted to Riverbank or Childrens Clinic, on the ground floor of Worcestershire Royal Hospital.

Once there, a member of the nursing team will perform some routine checks and questions and you will be visited by an anaesthetist.

The anaesthetist will discuss how the anaesthetic will be performed and you may be asked to sign a consent form for the procedure.

Your child should wear clothes without zips or metalwork for the scan and all jewellery, including piercings, should be removed.

An MRI safety questionnaire should be sent to you which should be completed before the scan. This asks about your child's allergies and whether your child has any metal implants or clips, dental braces, metal fragments in their eyes or pacemaker. These questions are asked to ensure the scan is safe for your child. If we cannot confirm the answers to these questions, your child's scan may be cancelled for safety reasons.

Our routine policy is to ask children who were assigned female at birth and are aged 12 or over to have a pregnancy test prior to general anaesthetic. This is a routine procedure which applies to everyone.

General anaesthetic

When it is time for the MRI, your child will be escorted to the anaesthetic room in the theatre department. You will be able to accompany them up to the anaesthetic room.

Your child will receive either an anaesthetic medicine through a cannula (a drip into their vein) or breathe anaesthetic gas through a facemask to go off to sleep. Once your child is asleep, you'll be shown out of the anaesthetic room and your child will be cared for by the anaesthetic team.

The anaesthetist and their team will move your child to the MRI scanner and they will carefully monitor your child during the scan.

As the scan can take a while, many parents use this as an opportunity to have a cup of tea. We will estimate how long the scan is likely to take so that you can return to

Riverbank or Childrens Clinic for when the scan is finished. Sometimes the scans can take longer than usual so don't worry if there is a delay.

Once the scan is complete, they will safely move your child back to the theatre department to wake up from the anaesthetic.

You will be invited up to recovery to be with your child as they wake and then you will stay on Riverbank or Childrens Clinic for a period of observation. Most children are ready to go home in a couple of hours after the anaesthetic, but some continue to be sleepy and need monitoring for the rest of the day.

When will you receive the results of the scan?

The results of the scan will be passed onto your named consultant who will discuss them with you.

What are the risks of MRI?

MRI scans are not painful and have no lasting effects.

MRI scans should be avoided in patients with certain types of metal implants because of the strong magnetic fields in the scanner. If you have any questions about metalwork please contact MRI appointments (number below) and they will obtain advice.

Some patients require an injection of contrast to help with the quality of the pictures and, very rarely, your child may have a reaction to the contrast agent.

Please ensure that you have completed the safety questionnaire for your child to reduce these risks.

What are the risks of general anaesthetic?

General anaesthetics are very safe and serious complications are uncommon.

Most children recover very quickly after anaesthetics and soon return to normal.

Rarely, some children may experience side effects or complications.

Very common (1-10 in 100):

Headache, nausea, vomiting, blurred vision – these may be caused by anaesthetic medications or fasting and usually get better within a few hours.

Sore throat – when under anaesthesia, a breathing tube is inserted to help your child breathe. This usually gets better without treatment.

Shivering – this may be caused by anaesthetic medications or because your child is cold and usually gets better with a warm blanket.

Bruising or soreness – this usually happens around the places where your child has a venous drip and usually improves without treatment.

Uncommon (1 in 1000):

Damage to teeth, lips and tongue – this may happen during the placement of the breathing tube or if your child clenches their teeth as they wake up.

Breathing problems – your child's breathing may be slower or shallower than normal as a result of some of the anaesthetic medications. This usually normalises quickly.

Behavioural problems – sometimes anaesthetic medications can make your child distressed or agitated when they wake up. This usually improves as the medicines wear off and they leave the theatre department.

Rare to very rare (1 in 10000-100000):

Damage to eyes – sometimes the surface of the eye may be damaged by contact, pressure or drying whilst your child is under anaesthesia. This is usually temporary and can be treated with eye drops.

Serious allergy to drugs (anaphylaxis) – such reactions are identified and treated rapidly. Very rarely, such a reaction can lead to death.

Stomach contents entering the lungs (aspiration) – this can happen if there is still food/drink in your child's stomach before they go off to sleep.

Contact numbers:

Riverbank paediatric ward: 01905 760 588

MRI appointments: 01562 828 844

Childrens Clinic: 01905 733 477

Should you need to cancel this appointment or your child becomes unwell and cannot come in please call 01905 733477.

Useful resources:

<http://www.rcoa.ac.uk/childrensinfo>

If your symptoms or condition worsens, or if you are concerned about anything, please call your GP, 111, or 999.

Patient Experience

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

Feedback

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

How to contact PALS:

Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: wah-tr.PALS@nhs.net

Opening times:

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that you may need to leave a voicemail message, but we aim to return your call within one working day.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.