

## Patient information factsheet

# Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) arthrogram

We have given you this factsheet because you have an appointment for a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) arthrogram. It explains what an MRI arthrogram is and what to expect at your appointment.

Your appointment letter will also give you details of your appointment date and other useful information. Please check the date and let us know if you will not be able to attend, so that another appointment can be made for you.

We hope this factsheet will help to answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact us using the details at the end of this factsheet.

### What is an MRI arthrogram?

An MRI arthrogram is a type of scan that uses strong magnetic fields and radio waves to produce detailed images of joints, such as the shoulder, hip or wrist. Part of the scan involves having an injection of a small amount of contrast medium (a fluid that helps make joint structures more visible during an MRI scan) into the joint under x-ray guidance.

### Why do I need an MRI arthrogram?

Your doctor may have referred you for an MRI arthrogram if you have been experiencing pain or issues in one or more of your joints. The scan can help your doctor to diagnose your condition and decide the best treatment option for you.

### How should I prepare for the MRI arthrogram?

We will send you a safety questionnaire with your appointment letter. Please fill this out and bring it with you to your appointment.

No other preparation is needed.

### What will happen on the day of the appointment?

Please arrive 15 minutes before your appointment time. You should check in at our reception using the self-service monitors. We will be available to provide assistance if needed.

We will greet you and then privately go through your completed safety questionnaire. This is a good opportunity to ask any questions you may have. We will then ask you if you're happy to go ahead with the MRI arthrogram.

# Patient information factsheet

We will ask you to change into a hospital gown and put all your belongings into a locker before your scan. You will need to remove all jewellery, piercings, drug patches, metallic denture plates and hearing aids. Please feel free to bring a dressing gown with you.

## **Contrast medium injection**

We will then take you to the fluoroscopy room in the main x-ray department. We will ask you to lie down on an x-ray table. We will then clean the skin around your affected joint with antiseptic before numbing the area with a local anaesthetic injection.

Once the local anaesthetic has taken effect, a radiologist (a specialist doctor who interprets medical imaging) will insert a needle into your affected joint under x-ray guidance. Once the needle is in the correct position, the radiologist will then inject your joint with contrast medium.

## **MRI scan**

After you have had the contrast medium injection, we will take you to the MRI suite for an MRI scan.

The scan will be performed by a radiographer (a registered healthcare professional who takes medical imaging).

An MRI scanner is a short cylinder that is open at both ends. You will enter the scanner head-first, lying on your back on the motorised bed. We will try to make you as comfortable as possible with the use of pads and supports.

To help us take high quality images, we will:

- position your affected joint in the centre of the scanner
- rest a light piece of specialised equipment (called a coil) over your joint
- ask you to lie very still during the scan

We will operate the MRI scanner using a computer in a separate room. You will be able to speak with the radiographer between scans via a built-in microphone system.

During the scan, you may feel your body temperature increase and you may experience tingling in your hands and feet. These are normal sensations. Please tell us if you feel uncomfortable at any point. We will give you an emergency buzzer to hold during the scan.

At certain times during the scan, the scanner will make loud tapping noises. This is the electric current in the scanner coils being turned on and off. We will give you ear plugs to protect your hearing from the noise. You will also have the option to listen to music (of your choice) through headphones during the scan.

## **How long will it take?**

The MRI arthrogram will take approximately 90 minutes in total.

## **What will happen after the MRI arthrogram?**

You will be able to go home immediately after the MRI arthrogram.

You will not be able to drive for the rest of the day, so please arrange for someone to pick you up from hospital and take you home. If you are not able to arrange a lift, and you feel well enough, you will be able to travel home by public transport.

# Patient information factsheet

## Are there any risks or side effects?

An MRI arthrogram is generally a safe procedure, but as with any medical procedure, there are some possible risks and side effects.

You may experience some temporary side effects, including:

- mild pain or discomfort at the injection site
- light bleeding at the injection site
- a hot flush, feeling of passing urine and/or metallic taste as the contrast medium is injected

## Infection

There is also a small risk of infection at the injection site.

## Allergic reaction

- Some people may have a rare allergic reaction to the contrast medium. We will go through a safety checklist before starting the scan to check if you are at increased risk.
- A delayed reaction to the contrast medium is a possible, but very rare, side effect. This may cause a rash to appear over the next few days or itching across your whole body. If this happens, call NHS **111** or speak to a pharmacist.
- If you develop shortness of breath, or your throat or face starts to swell, seek urgent medical help (this is a sign of a severe, life-threatening allergic reaction known as anaphylaxis).

## Radiation

To be able to safely give you the contrast medium injection, we will need to use x-rays (a type of radiation used to see inside your body). Exposure to radiation can slightly increase a person's risk of cancer, but for this scan, the risk is very low. Your doctor has decided that the benefit to you from the scan outweighs the low risk from the radiation. You will not be exposed to any more x-rays than is absolutely necessary.

We will discuss all the potential side effects and risks with you in detail at your appointment so that you can make an informed decision.

## Are there any alternatives?

Depending on what joint is being investigated, there may be alternative options to having an MRI arthrogram. Your doctor will discuss these with you before your scan.

## When will I receive my results?

We will not be able to give you any results on the day of your appointment. The radiographer will review your scan images to check they are of high enough quality. They will then send a report with your results to the doctor who referred you for the MRI arthrogram.

## MRI safety information

Please read the information below carefully.

## Implants and devices

Due to the powerful magnetic field created by the scanner, even when not in use, it may not be safe for some people with implants and devices to have an MRI scan. We will need to investigate the safety of these before your appointment.

# Patient information factsheet

You must contact us if you have:

- a cardiac pacemaker or defibrillator
- had a heart valve replacement
- ever had surgery on your head
- ever had metal in your eyes from welding or metal-work accidents (an eye x-ray may be needed before your scan)
- any metallic or electronic implants
- had any surgery within the past six weeks
- any auditory implants (such as cochlear implants)
- ever swallowed a capsule camera

If any of these apply to you and you do not let us know in advance, we may have to postpone your scan.

## **Pregnancy and breastfeeding**

MRI scans are not known to affect babies during pregnancy. However, part of the MRI arthrogram procedure involves the use of x-ray. X-rays use radiation which although safe for you, may impose a small risk on an unborn baby. For this reason, we have a legal obligation to ask anyone of childbearing capacity if there is any chance that they might be pregnant.

If you know or think you might be pregnant, or are currently breastfeeding, you should telephone us for advice as soon as you receive your appointment letter. Please note that we may need to postpone or cancel your scan.

It is your choice whether you wish to breastfeed after you have had a contrast medium injection. There is currently no evidence of any risk to a baby or child from drinking breast milk following an MRI contrast medium injection. If you have any concerns, please speak with the doctor who referred you for the MRI arthrogram.

## **Bringing someone with you for support**

If you wish to have someone in the scanner room with you for support, they will need to complete a safety questionnaire and comply with safety regulations.

We do not have crèche facilities, so if you are attending with young children, you will need to make arrangements for their supervision during your scan.

## **Further information**

We have enclosed a map and information about how to get to us. If you are arriving by car, please remember that our car parks can get very busy, so it's a good idea to allow plenty of time to find a space. You may wish to consider getting a lift or coming by public transport.

If you have a medical condition that means you need help getting to hospital, please contact your GP surgery so they can arrange transportation for you.

# Patient information factsheet

## Contact us

If you have any concerns or would like further information, please contact us.

MRI admin team

Telephone: **023 8120 6588** (Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm)

If you are unsure why you need to have this scan, please speak to the doctor who referred you.

## Useful links

UHS

[www.uhs.nhs.uk/for-visitors/southampton-general-hospital/getting-here](http://www.uhs.nhs.uk/for-visitors/southampton-general-hospital/getting-here)

NHS

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/mri-scan](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/mri-scan)

The Society of Radiographers: 'MRI Safety: What we need to know about'

[www.sor.org/learning-advice/professional-body-guidance-and-publications/documents-and-publications/posters/mri-safety-what-we-need-to-know-about](http://www.sor.org/learning-advice/professional-body-guidance-and-publications/documents-and-publications/posters/mri-safety-what-we-need-to-know-about)

The Society of Radiographers: 'Position statement for patients who are breastfeeding who require a CT or MRI with contrast'

[www.sor.org/learning-advice/professional-body-guidance-and-publications/documents-and-publications/policy-guidance-document-library/position-statement-for-patients-who-are-breastfeed](http://www.sor.org/learning-advice/professional-body-guidance-and-publications/documents-and-publications/policy-guidance-document-library/position-statement-for-patients-who-are-breastfeed)

If you are a patient at one of our hospitals and need this document translated, or in another format such as easy read, large print, Braille or audio, please telephone **0800 484 0135** or email **patientsupporthub@uhs.nhs.uk**

For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital, please visit **www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport**

Join our family of charity supporters with a monthly donation! It's a wonderful way to show your ongoing support of our patients and staff.

Scan the QR code or visit [southamptonsouthamptonscharity.org/donate](http://southamptonsouthamptonscharity.org/donate)



**Southampton  
Hospitals  
Charity**

Charity Registration Numbers 1051543

