1 Introduction

This booklet contains information for patients, parents and carers about having an MRI scan of your small bowel.

2 What does MRI mean?

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) is an imaging tool that uses a powerful magnet to scan your body.

The MRI scanner is a tube which is open at both ends. You can be seen at all times by the Radiographer.

The MRI scanner has a weight limit of 250kgs. Your referrer will need to make alternative arrangements if you are over this weight.

3 How can an MRI help?

The MRI scan can help in the diagnosis and treatment of your health condition. There is no use of radiation or X-rays.

4 What are the risks of an MRI?

MRI scans are not suitable for everyone. The Radiographers have to be 100% certain that you meet the safety standards before entering the MRI scanning room. There are no known risks of having an MRI if you meet the safety standards.
You will be sent a safety questionnaire to complete with your appointment letter. Please fill in this before your appointment. If you answer **yes** to any of the questions please call the department.

Like all medications, there is a small risk of side effects or an allergic reaction to the MRI contrast (Gadolinium). The most common side effects are itching, nausea or vomiting. These are usually soon after the injection. Please inform the Radiographer if you experience any symptoms. If you experience any symptoms after hours, please contact your local Accident and Emergency department.

If you suffer from Renal (Kidney) Impairment or Failure contact your referrer to organise a GFR blood test to assess this. You may not receive this contrast injection if your GFR result is too low. The Radiologist will make this decision.

The contrast is excreted from your body when you go to the toilet. There is evidence that some people retain some of the contrast longer than expected. There are currently no known side effects.

After having Buscopan®, very rarely patients can develop pain and redness in both eyes, which occurs in the 24 hours after the test. If this happens please attend the Accident and Emergency Department at your local hospital for a check-up.
5 What will happen if I choose not to have an MRI?
Your referring doctor will discuss alternative options with you.

6 What alternatives are available?
Imaging alternatives will need to be discussed with your referrer.

7 How should I prepare for an MRI?
Your appointment letter will include questionnaires that are essential for the MRI scan. Please fill in these before your appointment. If you answer yes to any of the questions please call the Imaging department.

You will receive a ‘Patient Information’ leaflet with your appointment letter explaining the examination.

You will have fasted for 4 hours prior to your appointment. You may have clear fluids, for example, water and take any medication.

You will need to arrive 1 hour before your appointment time as you will be given a drink called Mannitol which highlights and distends your bowel allowing better visualisation.

You will be asked to change into a hospital gown.

For safety reasons your belongings cannot go into the MRI
scanning room, this includes your shoes. There are small lockers outside the room for your belongings. If possible, please leave your valuables at home.

For most MRI scans an injection of contrast is a routine part of the examination. A cannula (a small plastic tube with a needle) will be placed into your arm and will remain in for the length of the scan. The cannula is used to administer the contrast and sometimes a muscle relaxant.

If you are claustrophobic, we recommend you talk with your referring doctor or your GP who may prescribe medication to help you relax. We cannot prescribe this medication for you in the MRI department. Please inform the Radiographer if you are claustrophobic or anxious.

**Pregnancy**

If you have reason to believe that you may be pregnant please inform the Imaging Contact Centre **before** starting any preparation, and **before** attending your appointment.

To date, there have been no reported effects from MRI to the unborn child. As a precaution we advise against scanning in the first trimester. If you are pregnant and require an MRI scan your referrer will discuss this with a Radiologist before the scan.

**Breastfeeding**

It may be beneficial to administer contrast into a vein to enhance the appearances of some of the tissues and improve
the diagnostic information the MRI scan provides. There is evidence that a very small amount of this contrast is secreted into the breastmilk of lactating mothers and of this only a very small amount will be absorbed by the gut of a nursing child. If you are breast-feeding, your MRI request will be discussed with a Radiologist and if the Radiologist believes a contrast injection is required for the MRI scan more information will be provided to you on the day so you can make an informed decision about whether to go ahead with the injection of contrast.

**Interpreter Services**

If you require the services of an official hospital interpreter please inform your doctor that has referred you for your scan or contact the Imaging Department

You may bring along a relative, carer or a friend who speaks and understands English to translate for you.

**Childcare**

We are unable to offer childcare facilities. If you need to bring your children with you, please bring along somebody who can look after them while you are being scanned.

**8 Asking for your consent**

We want to involve you in all the decisions about your care and treatment. If you decide to go ahead with the scan, by law we must ask you to consent to the test. This confirms that you agree to have the procedure and understand what it involves. The doctor that refers you for the scan will explain the risks,
benefits and any alternative tests. If you are unsure about any aspect of your scan please do not hesitate to speak to either your doctor, or the Radiographer who will carry out the scan. You can withdraw your consent at any time.

9 What happens during an MRI?

You will be asked to lie on your stomach if possible and camera will be placed on your back to capture the images.

The scan will last approximately 30 to 40 minutes. You will be asked to hold your breath for intervals of up to 20-25 seconds.

The MRI scanner is very sensitive to movement so it’s important you are still throughout the scan. The Radiographers will make you as comfortable as possible.

You will be given a contact buzzer. If you experience any problems you can squeeze the buzzer and the Radiographer will talk to you and if required come into the room.

The MRI makes a loud knocking sound which changes throughout the scan. You will be given earplugs that help reduce the noise. You will also be given headphones which allow the Radiographer to communicate with you when necessary. The table may vibrate during some scans and the table may move in and out of the scanner. This is all normal.
At different times during the scan you will receive the Buscopan® and contrast. These are both routine parts of the scan.

Buscopan® is administered to relax your bowel motion to reduce blurring of the images. It is a routine part of this examination. It also relaxes the muscles in your eyes and your vision may become blurred.

The contrast is a colourless liquid called Gadolinium. The contrast is used to enhance the bodies’ organs, tissues and blood vessels which help the Radiologist make a diagnosis.

During the scan you may experience tingling in your hands and feet and may feel an increase in body temperature. These are normal sensations. Please use the contact buzzer if you feel uncomfortable.

**10 What should I expect after an MRI?**

If you have a cannula, it will be removed and you will be able to get dressed and go. You may eat and drink as normal following your scan unless you have other tests on the day with instructions not to eat or drink.

You will not receive your results immediately. The images will be reviewed by a Radiologist (a specialist doctor in interpreting MRI scans) and a report is sent to your referrer. If you are unsure who referred you for the MRI scan you can check with the Radiographers or Imaging Reception.
If you do not already have an appointment to return to the clinic, you should contact your clinic to arrange this appointment.

The most common side effects from Mannitol are nausea and diarrhoea. If symptoms persist contact your doctor or your local Accident and Emergency department.

11 Where can I get more information?
University College Hospital London
http://www.uclh.nhs.uk/pages/home.aspx

The Department of Health
www.dh.gov.uk

Royal College of Radiologists
http://www.goingfora.com/

The UCLH Children and young people’s website has information and short films made with our patients about having an MRI and other hospital treatments.
http://www.childrenandyoungpatients.uclh.nhs.uk/

UCL Hospitals cannot accept responsibility for information provided by other organisations
12 References

Royal College of Radiologists
http://www.rcr.ac.uk

Gadolinium

Buscopan®
www.boehringer-ingelheim.co.uk

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13 Contact details

UCH Switchboard
Tel: 020 3456 7890

Imaging Booking Centre 9am-5pm Weekdays
(To change or cancel an appointment)
Tel: 020 3456 7002
Email: uclh.referrals.imaging.booking.office@nhs.net

Hospital Transport Services
Tel: 020 3456 7010

Website: www.uclh.nhs.uk
14 How to find us

Please read your appointment letter carefully as there are several locations for our MRI scanners.
Public transport for:

University College Hospital at Westmoreland Street
16-18 Westmoreland Street
London
W1G 8PH

**Tube**
The nearest tube stations, which are 10-15 minutes’ walk are:

- Baker Street (Hammersmith & City, Jubilee, Bakerloo, Circle, and Metropolitan lines)
- Bond Street (Jubilee and Central lines)
- Regents Park (Bakerloo Line)

**Overground trains**
Marylebone railway station is within 20 minutes’ walk.

**Bus**
Bus services are as follows:

- From Bond street station: 7, 8, 10, 25, 55, 73, 98, 176.
- From Marylebone Road: 18, 27, 30.
- From Portland Place: 88, C2.

**Please note:** You can travel on buses using an Oyster card or contactless payment card. Buses are no longer able to accept cash to pay for your bus fare.
1. University College Hospital
2. University College Hospital Macmillan Cancer Centre
3. UCLH HQ (250 Euston Road)
4. University College Hospital at Westmoreland Street
Space for notes and questions